

寺町朱穂

TERAMACHI AKEHO

CHRONICLE OF BARSAC

バルサク戦記

片翼のリクと白銀のルーク

魔王軍の姉 救世主の弟 VS

退魔の一族に転生した紅と白銀、それぞれの魔道。

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Chronicle of Barusak

One-Winged Riku and the Silver Rook

Volume 1

Written by Akeho Teramachi

Illustrated by Fuji Choko

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Arc I

Riku the Taboo Child

Chapter 1

The Day the Gears Have Broken Up

“Riku, my beloved daughter. Just get drown and become food for demons already.”

The father was carrying Riku by the collar.*1

Without being able to touch the ground, her legs were waving around to no use. The father was calmly walking, getting closer to the edge of the cliff. It wasn't just a simple cliff; but a very steep one due to the constant shaving off of the raging sea.*2 The stormy waves that were blasting onto the cliff looked like they were saying: “Come quickly. Fall at once.” It was a very scary scene.

Riku looked at her father.

“Father?”

The father was giving a smile that made him look as if he was troubled.

Even though he was going overboard now, he used to be very kind to Riku. Of course, he didn't neglect the spiritualist training. No matter how good she became at handling the spear, no matter how much she improved in swordplay, if she wasn't able to use the technique to infuse the demon banning power, she would get beaten. She would be whipped, beaten down with the demon banning sword. It hurt so much she couldn't bear. She hated it very much when she was ridiculed.

“This way I will end up falling down!”

Even so, normally he was very kind.

Riku knew that he didn't put food she didn't like on the table when eating out of consideration to her. Even when she had

broken up vases, her father only smiled and forgave her. When she wanted something, he would buy her. He would also give her cute dresses as present. When Riku had five years old, which at the time her mother had died from illness, her father comforted her. He became more affective and even decreased the training time.

Yes, Riku's father was very kind to her... Or at least, that was what it was supposed to be. Because there is no way a father like that would act this way. Riku soon became desperate and kept looking at her father.

"But Riku is an useless child, you know. That's why you will be falling down."

Cutting all of her hope in half, her father said.

She had already noticed it. Even though a smile was showing at her father's face, his eyes weren't smiling. It was similar to how he was during training. They were ones that showed profound frigidness.

"Even though Riku is already seven years old, she can't use spiritualist arts at all. This is simply not having any talent. A child without talent only puts shame to the Barusak household. That is why Riku is unneeded."

"But..."

Color vanished from Riku's sight.

It was said to her that she was unneeded. It was said to her that she had no talent. But then, what was she supposed to do from now on? Being driven out from her house, how is she supposed to keep living on? As if trying to hug, Riku started clinging on her father's arm.

"Fa-father! I, I will make more effort! So, please let me stay! Please, don't throw me away!"

"Riku."

Riku's father started to caress Riku's head with his free hand.

As if cherishing it, he stroked her hair. It was a red color that was as if it was burning. Riku didn't like it very much when her father stroked her hair. It wasn't that she didn't like her hair because of the red color. Rather, it was that she just couldn't get used to the way he did it. It felt to her like he was just looking at a research subject; it felt very scary.

But now, she couldn't displease her father in any way. That's why she desperately endured the discomfort.

"That's just an already determined fact. The four year old Rook long ago was already able to infuse demon banning power. The one that can't do the basic of the basics is only you, Riku. And I've always felt revolted at your hair anyway. It's nauseating."

Her father shook off the thin arms that were clinging at his arm.

Normally speaking, this shouldn't be enough to make her lose her grasp. But Riku was deeply shaken by her father. Even with her unimaginable strength, there was no way for her to keep up on clinging to his arm.

Her red hair was indeed something peculiar. Both her parents and in both of their families, and even her older sister and young brother, none of them had red hair. Only Riku had it. Her hair wasn't well liked, but even so, to her beloved father so admittedly affirm such was something she didn't think it would happen.

"Good-bye, Riku. Don't appear in front of the Barusak household ever again."*3

And with this one word, Riku was thrown away.

For a moment, she felt like she was floating, but soon after that, she was able to hear the sound of the wind being cut

through.

She was rapidly nearing the raging sea. The dark waves seemed to be inviting her, saying: "Come, come over here." As soon as she fell down, she was violently engulfed by the waves. Her entire view was filled with bubbles and the movement of the waves were breaking her body.

In desperation, Riku tried to make her way through the waves.

"Fa... a... Cough, cough... Father!"

Distant, on the peak of the cliff, she could see the silhouette of a person.

As if seeking for salvation, she was reaching out her hand. But soon, the next wave would come and hit her. The huge wave would sweep down on little Riku. All she could do was to try to hang on.

— — —

There was a man that from very far above watching Riku disappearing into the waves.

It was Riku's father, Raimon Barusak.

Wearing a coat which had the crest of the Barusak household on it, he was looking down at Riku. Within the raging sea, a tiny white hand could barely be seen, but a big wave would soon engulf it, then making it not possible to be seen anymore. The eye-catching red hair was nowhere to be seen.

"So, in the end there was nothing like a hidden power? A waste of expectation after all."

The red hair rarely seen in this country and the super strength unimaginable to a seven years old.

If it wasn't for those reasons, he would have certainly driven Riku Barusak out sooner. Raimon already knew Riku didn't

have any talent in spiritualist arts by the time she was five years old. Not known by Riku, in fact, Riku's mother was killed around this time as someone useless that bore a powerless person.

"Then, father... Why didn't you kill her sooner?"

Behind Raimon, a small shadow appeared.

A silver haired boy that had one of his eyes hidden by his hair was looking at him. Raimon kindly patted the boy's head.

"It's because there was a chance that that thing might have had a special power."

"A special power, you say? I've never seen elder sister ever accomplish anything."

The boy was puzzled.

Seeing the boy's behavior, Raimon disagreed by shaking his head.

"That thing's hair color was that red, right?"

"Yes, red."

"There is a superstition that red haired which doesn't resemble the parents hold hidden powers. Besides... That thing's muscle strength is abnormal."

Raimon narrowed his eyes.

The red hair that is rumored to hold hidden powers...

And Riku's thin arms that can easily deal with those seemingly unmovable spear and two-handed sword, even though such should have been impossible. Even when carrying pots which require adults to put some effort in order to carry them, to her, not even traces of fatigue are seen. As if to be expected, she was almost able to carry near one hundred of them. Although in the end, she let them slip and broke all of them, to a normal seven year old child, rather than one

hundred, carrying two or three at once is what would make something like that happen.

“That thing is abnormal.”

“But even so, elder sister didn’t hold any spiritualist powers in the end.”

To Rook’s response, Raimon nodded admittedly.

Riku was clearly abnormal.

But even then, she didn’t have any spiritualist power.

The four year old Rook, who will eventually become the successor of the Barusak house, was already starting to distinguish himself over others as a spiritualist. Even if in the most impossible coincidence something was to happen to Rook, then just having the fifteen years old Raku marry someone should do it. In other words, comparing to demon banning power users, Riku with just her weird power wasn’t really needed.

“Even though I thought the true nature of her powers would reveal themselves if she was at the brink of death... Rook, you must properly devote yourself as the successor of the Barusak household. You must not become useless like her. As your family, I’m putting my trust on you.”

“Father, that’s mean.”

Rook grasped Raimon’s big hand.

And then, made a sorrowful face.

“Saying it like this, doesn’t that sound like I’m inferior to elder sister?”

“No, you’ve been properly making effort. Even though you are still four years old, you’ve even reached a realm at theory that not even me can compare. Without doubt, you are a genius that is born only once in a thousand years. Indeed... It is

not in a level that can be compared to that thing. I'm expecting a lot of you."

"Yes!"

Turning his back from the cliff, Raimon left together with his to be successor son.

Rook, somewhat feeling lonesome, looked back at the cliff. Then, with a really tiny voice that even Raimon, who was walking next to him, didn't hear, he said.

"If she was a little bit cuter, I could have saved her... But even if I help her, she won't really be of much help for the events anyway..."

"Did you say something, Rook?"

"No, it was nothing. But leaving that aside, father, I have something to talk regarding the administration of the territory. About the land in our earldom that was supposed to be given to elder sister; could it be given to me?"

"That plot of land? I don't really have anything against... But that piece of land is that one which you can't even cultivate wheat, you know?"

"There is no problem. I'm four years old already. I can properly manage the territory. As the next head of the Barusak household, for the sake of our people, and also for the sake of our standing as spiritualists, I'm looking forward to devote myself entirely."4*

Seeing Rook's bright smile, Raimon felt relieved.

He was a successor that can really be relied on. For both the part of the territory administration and the spiritualist part, the Barusak household will be secure. For this too much excellent Rook, Raimon decided to give his all into raising him.

That was what Raimon's heart decided.

then pretty please do tell. Deciding names for this kind of stuff isn't my forte... It almost made me give up on translating this story.

Names:

リク: Riku

ルーク: Rook

ライモン: Raimon

ラク: Raku

バルサック: Barusak

Chapter 2

Contract

Riku Barusak more or less always believed herself to be a special existence.

She believed so from the time she was born.

That is because even from the time she was born, she possessed knowledge. It wasn't the case of how one would be born and not know about anything, but rather, she was self-aware of memories that she shouldn't have ever experienced and have knowledge of.

In other words, she had memories of her previous life, or something of the sort.

In Riku's previous life, she used to be a girl without any distinguishing features. She used to have some problems with her school grades, used to be bullied by the classmates, used to run away from the reality to the otaku culture, and before being ran over by a truck, she used to lead a very ordinary day-to-day life.

But Riku didn't accept her previous world memories. Rather, she despised them.

Having some unknown person's memories inside oneself was nasty, although it couldn't be helped. And so, she completely ignored her previous life memories. The knowledge about things like televisions or cars was convenient to have, but she still didn't remember most of the more useful parts of her memories. If she wouldn't be able to remember such things, then it was worthless.

But there was a single thing that made her pay full attention to it. It was a memory about a certain game.*1

Apparently, this game was of the gal game genre...

The game was about a demon banning arts practitioner main character that together with his very intimate friends*2 was to fight the demon race that are trying to unseal their demon lord. Even so, the main objective of the game wasn't killing off the demon race, but rather, having the main character enjoy himself with the unfolding love of the cute girls. The main character of the game was, in fact, her three years old little brother Rook.

In the game, Riku was introduced as the first harem member. At the point of time when the game started, she was the second sister who didn't stand out. About the settings, in Riku's childhood, her life was saved by Rook, and because of that, she started to deeply trust Rook. Or apparently so was it...

"Because at Rook's side is where I belong to."

While saying that and laughing, she would come forward to take personal care of him together with a big-breasted maid.

Strong in physical labor, in the starting quest, one would need to use Riku's strength for moving a big pot and discovering a secret door. But after the second week, you get an equipment item that let the other party members to move the pots as well.*3 Basically, it means that even if Riku was not there, the story would be able to advance. In fact, other than that quest to move the pots, she doesn't really have much use.

Even so, after correcting the demon lord's sister, who led the demon army, at the scene when the world came to peace, right at the corner, she made an appearance. As far as it goes, Riku is a character that lives on until the end of the story.

Although she is useless.

While Riku hated her previous life memories, she was still interested in the memories about this game. The world is at peace now. The demons were active, but there has never been

any moves causing big turmoil. Even so, undoubtedly, a great war will soon start. That's why raising her own power was necessary.

Even so, no matter what, Riku wasn't able to use the spiritualist arts. No matter how much she trained, she could only become stronger physically. At that pace, she wouldn't be able to be useful at anything.

But even so, she had known she was going to be saved in the end.

"Wasn't it because you had such a carefree life that you actually got careless?"

Somebody's voice came to her ears.

Yes, Riku had been careless.

She wasn't negligent at her training and was prepared to struggle to death with it. Right now, all she had was sheer muscle power, but perhaps after becoming an adult, while she wouldn't be a very good spiritualist, it would at least be enough for her to be able to stay at the Barusak household. But because of her previous life memories, she had become negligent. She had supposed she would be able to keep living there safe and sound by being together with Rook.

Yes, thinking like that wasn't something good.

"That's right. Because that happened... Because such a thing happened that all this was no good."

After being carried to the shore, she finally understood.

Because she had those memories, the herself that stupidly carried on with that overconfidence was hateful. With her previous life memories as someone that was worthless at anything, the herself that without even being aware of it became negligent was irritating.

No, was it really the herself of her previous life?

Riku started thinking about that. This wasn't anything like the memories of her previous life. For instance, it might as well have been nothing more than a simple book that was left in Riku's bedroom at some point in time. It was nothing more than a clump of unimportant information she didn't directly have relation to.

In other words, it was just another something that was completely unrelated to Riku Barusak.

Because of this mysterious something, her own life was turned into a mess.

Riku sank her nails in her forehead with strength. Blood was gradually flowing out. But after all that, this level of pain didn't matter at all. Dark feelings started to spread, filling Riku's heart.

It was at that time.

"Yes, then, those memories are not needed."

A black winged man then landed right in front of Riku.^{4*}

At this beach, which there wasn't supposed to be anyone, an obscure figure was standing. It was a beautiful young man that had black wings, and he was looking at Riku. Glancing at his black wings, Riku laughed.

"Are you a demon?"

"No, I am a shinigami."

The shinigami was faintly smiling. In his hands, he was carrying a weird scroll.

In the seemingly old scroll, there were very tiny letters that were written very close to each other. Riku narrowed her eyes and read the letters.

"Contract writings... One may have one wish come true. In

exchange for that, one must consent in giving up one's own soul... What kind of joke is this?"

"It's not a joke. I can grant you your wish. In exchange, I want to receive a soul. Actually, while in a certain way it is your own soul, this soul I want is this previous life soul of yours that is parasitizing your actual soul. Souls that are capable of possession have strong attachment to the world... If you let it ripen, it's very tasty."

The shinigami licked his lips.

It was a long and red tongue that seemed more or less like a snake hunting for its prey. Seeing his scary and creepy expression, Riku started trembling a bit. But even so, she noticed she was actually attracted by his proposal.

"In other words, even if you were to grant a wish for me, I... Riku Barusak won't be really affected, right?"

"If I were to say, the memories of the soul possessing you... Well, it will be just about the existence of that thing you call "previous life memories" all being forgotten. Your own soul itself won't suffer any consequences. Of course, not even in the afterlife."

"I see."

The exact moment she had heard those words, her heart already decided what she was going to do.

As Riku got up, she looked in the drooling eyes of the shinigami. Seeing this, the shinigami perceived Riku's resolve. While having his eyes shining, he leaned forward. With a somewhat weird voice, he encouraged Riku.

"Now, say it. Do you want a bathtub overflowing with gold? Or perhaps good looks that are enough to make anyone prostate before you? Maybe dropping the hammer on someone that looked down on you?5* Ah... If you give both

your souls, I will give you a special service. I will grant you two wishes.”

“Place.”

Interrupting the shinigami, Riku started to say her wish.

While looking at the shinigami that was blinking at what she said before with cold eyes, Riku, with feelings coming from the depths of her heart, she raised her voice as if she was declaring something.^{6*}

“I want a place where I can belong to. A place where I can belong in which my power is recognized. I want to get a place I can belong, and for the Barusak household which threw me away... I will get revenge myself. I want to give hell to them who didn't accept my power.”

“Hmm...”

The shinigami looking bored was scratching his own cheek.

And then, he looked at Riku from head to feet.

“But you can't use spiritualist powers, you know. Your super strength you were born with makes you unable to use your spiritual powers. If the structure of your body is not changed, you won't be able to use spiritual power for the rest of your life. Ah, that's right! Won't you give your own soul as well? If you do that, I can not only prepare you a place to belong to, but also regarding the spiritual powers...”

“I don't need it.”

Riku said with a clear voice.

Opposite from her skinny appearance, her eyes were shining from ambition.

“I have this power. So what if I won't be able to use spiritualist powers? I am myself. I will make them understand... I will do so with my own powers!!”

Riku was showing a smile full of desire.

Seeing Riku acting like this, the shinigami kicked a pebble out of boredom.

“What, that’s boring. You can’t find a same opportunity that easily, you know?”

“As if I would want something like this because of that. Besides, if I get too greedy, I will end up getting overconfident again.”

“Tch... Just because I was thinking I was going to get to eat both souls. Well, I guess it can’t be helped.”

The shinigami held her head with his hand.

Faint light similar to fireflies started to surround Riku. Her feet distanced itself from the ground and she was slowly rising up in the air. But even so, she didn’t feel scared. She just kept up like that.

“If you keep going forward, you will obtain your place to belong to. But that is if you survive until then, though. Well then, I will be taking my payment.”

The port city Perikka has always been very euphoric.

Foreign merchants minding their own profits, pirates that collected gold and silver treasures living extravagantly, the pleasure quarter that made profits by providing their services to the said pirates. The central avenue boasted of beauty comparable to the capital, but if one were to take one step inside the avenue, one could notice the alcohol smell wafting in the air even at daytime and see the figure of sailormen dead drunk.

The place Riku, who had lost everything, was driven to was this kind of port city. By that time, she had already lost the

knowledge of the trade she did with the shinigami and of the game.

She woke up at the beach as if nothing happened and with much struggle finally reached this city.

“Atchoo!! Uuu... It’s cold...”

Since she was soaked in sea water, it couldn’t be helped that it was cold. Since there was no way there would be a towel for her to dry herself, she walked to the city as she was dripping with water.

Her beautifully tied red hair was moving one side to other as she walked. There was not even a single sign remaining that her clothes used to be gorgeous dress. The frills were torn and the cloth was so dirtied that it looked like an old rag. There was no way any person that walked by would ever think that she was of that prestigious Barusak household.

Remembering the home she couldn’t ever come back to, tears were about to form at her eyes.

“Let’s find a place to work for now...”

At the present time, Riku had neither a place to stay, nor money.

Even the seven years old Riku knew that because of her current situation, she needed to work and get money.

But there is no way the world could be such a nice place to live.

“Haa!? Why do I need to hire a filthy brat like you.”

She was bluntly rejected.

Riku was then carried by the belly and thrown out to the street. With a bam, the backdoor of the store was closed. Sucking her snot, she unsteadily got up. Leaning on the wall with her back, she looked at the firmly shut door.

“It’s really not going well...”

Riku sighed.

That was already the tenth time she was rejected.

Today, it was ten times, yesterday was fifteen times and the day before, the same number.

Something like a store that would hire a dirty frail seven years old was nowhere to be found. Riku waveringly stood up and left from where she was, starting to look for another store that seemed like it would possibly hire her.

Her belly was growling. Ever since she was thrown from the cliff, she hasn’t eaten anything. If she couldn’t at least find something to eat somewhere, she would end up dying. She didn’t really know what to do, but she certainly didn’t want to die. Such was the only feeling she was holding right now.

While she held her belly which was complaining from hunger, she turned to an alley. At that time, she felt as if somebody was gazing at her. Turning her head back, she noticed that a group of dirty pirate-like men were gathered. While they were showing dirty smiles, they were talking to each other as if there was something fun happening around the place.

“There is a brat there. Probably a girl.”

“Let’s sell her.”

“Just as I wanted some money to go drink. That’s just right in time.”

“Hey, she is looking at us, that brat.”

Noticing Riku’s gaze was on them, they put up an expression of nice people. Then, they slowly approached Riku.

“Hey, little lady, what’s the matter? Are you lost?”

“Maybe you are hungry? Let’s give you something nice to

eat.”

Riku’s back muscles stood up.

Contrary to their tender voices and gentle expressions, the men’s eyes were showing an impure darkness. The looks that seemed to be licking all her body that the men were giving was more disgusting than anything. Riku stepped back while shaking her head.

“There is nothing to be afraid of, you know?”

“Come over here. Let’s go together with the grampas here. We will bring you to a place with food and beautiful clothes.”

“A very fun place.”

Riku was so scared she couldn’t say anything.

But it was dangerous to stay here. As if her instincts were being stirred up, she ran away without giving a glance back.

“Hey, don’t run away!”

“Wait there!”

“Get her!!”

Behind her, she could hear the men from before spouting insults.

As expected, the gentleness from before was only a lie. Riku was now earnestly moving her feet. Running through the alley, she rushed out to a big avenue. While grandiosely dirtying up the street’s floor whose slabs were beautifully dyed, she ran away for now.^{7*}

If one were to talk about a big avenue, it would be about a place with many people coming and going through.

Among the people that were dressed up with clean clothes, there were people that avoided Riku, looking at her as something unpleasant, but most of them didn’t care about

some dirty orphan at all and kept walking.

Riku was pushing aside and making her way through such people, deciding to be more important to get some distance from those men from before than caring about the people around at the moment. She used all her strength in doing so, and so, she had the impression that some of people she pushed aside had fallen down, but it was something that didn't have anything to do to Riku's situation right now.

"For now, I need to get away!"

She frantically moved her feet.

But even so, Riku was a child and the pursuing party were adults. Of course she wasn't afraid of losing in physical strength. But the problem was that Riku was alone while there were three people after her. Moreover, Riku was now starving and couldn't use all of her power. She couldn't think of having chances to win.

Anyhow, if she stopped her feet, she would surely be caught. Thinking of any possible way to save herself, she started looking at her surroundings. And then, she noticed that there were some big barrels ahead. Barrels that were bigger than her stature.

"If I use that, it might work. Yes, if it is this much, it should work somehow."

Riku rushed over next to the barrels.

Seeing them close up, they were big enough that even if Riku opened her arms wide, she wouldn't be able to carry it in her arms.

Even so, Riku somehow lifted up the barrel. They were very heavy, but it wasn't to be point of not being able to carry them. She had the impression of hearing a sound seemingly like what would be contents of the barrel shaking, but even so, she

didn't mind. She didn't have the time to do so. The pursues, even now were about to catch up.

“Eat... THIS!!”

Riku threw the barrel with all her strength.

Riku made the barrel fall down amidst the crowd of people that were passing by and it made an explosion sound. The wine inside the barrel rained down upon the pedestrians.

It was something that happened very suddenly, so not only the pursuers, but the people walking at the street were surprised because of it.

“Waah!?”

“What the hell are you doing!? It was dangerous!”

“Who was the one that did this?!”

She didn't have the time to involve herself with the turmoil behind her.

Without giving a glance back, she once again started to run away.

Running and running and running and after that...

“Can't... run anymore...”

Her sight was intensely shaking.

And then, just like that, she collapsed.

Raising a sound, she fell down into garbage in the back-alley. Its rotten smell and the smell of alcohol characteristic of the place was wrapping onto her as she remained unmoving.

Even in such state, she didn't do anything to get out of that place. Her legs that should have been used to run until exhaustion were going through muscle pain. Her stomach was empty and her throat was dried up.

Because of how she had been running and how she had

thrown that barrel, all the power that she had left has been used up.

The following path for an orphan that were at the limits of exhaustion and hunger was only one.

As an outcast of the society, she was going to silently meet death.

“”Ahh... In the end, I will die...””

With her cheek touching the cold ground, she aimlessly started to think.

...And her stomach was making a painful sound.

She asked herself how many days have it been since she has been thrown away into the sea. Riku didn't know it, but one thing she did know was that she wasn't able to eat anything for a very long time.

In the city that gathered various savage people, the only beautiful from the outside port city Perikka, there was no such thing as generous nobles doing charity around. Rather, there were more people that would kick around a child such as Riku. Being kicked certainly did hurt.

But the fact of how she had been thrown away by her dad is what hurt her the most.

She couldn't use spiritualist powers, and so she was driven out as something unneeded. That was all there was to her parent-child relationship with her dad in the end. Thinking about that, she felt a pain that was as if her heart had been gorged out.

In the exterior she was full of wounds, and in the inside she was full of wounds too. It hurt so much, so much that it was agonizing.

“”If that is what is going to happen from now on, maybe

dying might be more peaceful. But... As expected, it is scary..."

Even though she wasn't going to be saved, she couldn't help but embrace a stupid hope.

Before such stupid herself, she self-mockingly laughed.

Somehow mustering power, she turned her head upwards. Up in there, there was a radiant sky with not even one cloud.

"Beautiful."

She murmured.

She didn't exactly know why.

That sky was... It was as if the sky was blowing away the dirty gray of the streets. That was because it was such a radiant blue sky.

She came to think that the world was beautiful.

Before noticing, tears were already flowing to her cheeks.

Without sobbing or doing any sound, it was silently flowing.

"If I die under such sky... Then, maybe it's fine."

The beautiful sky made her forget the dirty back-alley that smelled like alcohol and cleared up the pain of her body and of her heart. If it was that sky, it would surely embrace and accept everything.^{8*}

Yes, by closing both eyes here... It will surely be possible to die with this peaceful feeling.

But even so, Riku couldn't close her eyes.

Somewhere inside her heart, something was calling.

It said that it didn't want to give up.

Even if it was for only a little longer.

Even now it felt like fading away, but it still looked forward to that fading hope.

In such a painful reality, it's obvious that peacefully dying is much better. There wasn't anyone going to save Riku; there was nobody that would gain anything from doing so.

A person that wasn't capable of anything was better off just dying here.

“Even then, I still don't want to give up after all.”

Riku raised her hand.

Mustering the last drops of power she had, she extended her hand to that beautiful brilliant sky.

If she were to be able to grasp that sky, she felt like she would be able to obtain hope. It was something that was funny to the point of anyone to hold their stomach out of laughs. But even so, she had the feeling that it was true.

Obviously, that hand didn't grasp anything.

With all her strength used up, in an arc, her hand slowly fell down to the ground.

Or so was what it was supposed to happen.

Names:

港町ペリッカ: Port city Perikka

Chapter 3

The Demon Boy

“No, you can’t die yet.”

In an instant, Riku’s hand was caught before falling down.

At this moment, a certain feeling of warm spread from her arm to her whole body. She then came back to her senses. It cleared away the apathy, and bit by bit the pain of her legs was disappearing.

As Riku was staring at the person in wonder, that voice had come from above.

“Wh...Who?”

The one that grabbed her arm was a youth that released a scary aura.

His glaring blue sharp eyes were looking through Riku. It was very far off from a gentle impression. The clothes he was using weren’t gorgeous clothes nobles and merchants would use, but shabby traveling clothes. The sword in the left of his waist didn’t seem to be of a good quality either.

No matter from which perspective one where to see him from, he didn’t look like someone that had the assets to be casually expending money on things. Moreover, in the gap of his clothes, it was possible to notice deeply scales of black color covering his arm, just like the color of his hair.

If he was a normal human, there was no way he would be growing scales in his arm.

Which meant that he was...

“De...mon?”

As her arm was being hold, she vaguely remembered about the demon banning arts textbook.

Demonkind... They looked like humans, but they were something that wasn't human. Parts of their body would have some kind of bestial feature; they were an wicked existence that are to be destroyed.^{1*}

They would boil humans in cauldrons to eat them, would kill them for pleasure, and even burn forests just to make them a wasteland.

They were dirty and cruel beings that didn't have even the slightest feeling of sympathy. Their vile existence were the enemy of spiritualists, no, the enemy of the humankind.

This enemy of the humankind was now extending his own hand to Riku. After that, she didn't have any idea on where all this would end up to.

At the back of Riku's mind, her father's words were coming to her.

"You see, demons are a nuisance. Part of their appearance are exactly just like humans, but that human part is just for deceiving and fooling us. They are cowardly and vulgar; they are the worst living beings on the world. If you let them deceive you, it's the end. May it be just getting killed, being eaten, being burnt to death; the only thing waiting for you is a future worse than slavery. Exterminating the whole demon race is the purpose of us, spiritualists, and protecting the royalty from them is the duty of the Barusak household."

Although those were many words, after being repeated many times by her father, they got ingrained in her mind.

Without doubt, the demon was doing this for its own sake.

Be it eating, be it killing, be it burning to death.

But she didn't know.

Riku didn't know what this demon intended to do with her.

"Leivein, are you sure you want to pick up this human?"

Another youth, who was using monocle, was looking at him from behind.

His ears that were being somewhat hidden by his hair were longer than those of a human. He too was of the demon race. Continuing what he was saying before, this youth spoke to the one he called Leivein.

"I am against it. While I have to recognize that that strength which allowed her to lift up that barrel was incredible, and that once she grows up, she could be of good use, but even so, this one is a human. Besides, doesn't the brooch pinned to her clothes have the crest of that Barusak family engraved on it? The Barusak is one of that spiritualist families. Bringing her is too risky. Also, she has red hair. Even in the demon race, there are basically nobody with this color of hair, and this is much more for the humans. Isn't this too suspicious? If you bring her into your battalion, what would happen if she were to betray you?"

"Piguro, are you blind?"

Leivein, in low voice, rebuked Piguro.

After hearing that, Piguro made a sour face as if he had eaten a bug. In one go, Leivein lifted her up, getting her to stand up. While she had more or less already recovered from her exhaustion, her legs were still hurting. Because of that, she twisted her face due to the pain. But without caring about it, Leivein kept talking.

"Indeed, this one is a human. And from the Barusak even."

Leivein flicked the brooch that was pinned to her clothes, making a metallic sound.

No matter how she would be frowning at them, Riku could

only hear their terms for now.

Physically, she didn't have the choice of running away. Even if she shook them off, she would be caught right after. Different from the men from before, she didn't have the confidence of being able to run away from the two people in front of her.

She could only hear out what was about to happen to her. To what she was going to be used for, or if she was going to be killed.

Only the worst possibilities were rushing through her head. As if it couldn't get worse, her face was starting to turn pale.

Being indifferent to how Riku was, Leivein kept talking to Piguro.

"I only care about one thing: whether this is going to be of benefit for the Demon Lord army or not. If it is for the Demon Lord army, it doesn't matter if she is a human."

"But!"

"See for yourself. Look at her eyes. They are eyes that clearly have the desire to keep living. If it is her, there is no way she is going to betray the Demon Lord army."

Leivein straightened the collar of the clothes Riku was using at one go.*2

All the garbage that was clinging to her was falling down from her clothes. Some of the garbage dirtied Leivein's arms a bit, but it didn't seem he was caring about it.

"Little girl becoming of red, tell us your true name."

"..."

Riku was hesitating.

Something like saying one's own name was like offering oneself everything to the other party.

The young Riku still didn't know the exact details, but she remembered she was taught that if a name is taken hold of, it was possible to use it to bind the soul of the person in question.

It wasn't something that you could reveal to anyone you've never seen or known. Now, for the savage demons, it was even more the case. Besides, as a member of one of the spiritualist families, something such as giving a demon your name was like an act of sacrilege.

But if Riku didn't say it now, she would be killed.

After reaching her limit, she told them her name.

"Riku."

"What, is that even a name? I won't say it twice. Tell us what your "true name" is."

She started to shiver.

She felt a feeling of dread going through her. She was already at death's doorsteps, but what she felt was something that seemed to drive her further into a even deeper abyss.*3

And the traveling mantle that was covering his upper part of the body rose up with an intense force.*4 From within the gap of the mantle, there was wings hiding, which seemed sharp. If it was something like a body of a little girl like Riku, it looked like they would easily be able to pierce through.

That's why unconsciously...

"Ri...Rinkus."

She ended up saying it.

It was the first time since she was born that she said the name only her and her parents knew.

And even so, it was to a demon that she had only met.

"Rinkus, is it? I see, that's why it is Riku."

To Leivein's indifferent words, Riku nodded without saying anything.

To her current state, that was all she was able to do.

Leivein was still making a stern face, but it seems that he loosened up a bit.^{5*}

“And with that, I got hold of your name. By me saying that, you know what it means, right?”

“Ye-yes...”

Whether it is being eaten or being killed. Maybe even being burned to death or something even worse.

Only scary possibilities were going through her head. She was very so weak and didn't have any talent, so she was thrown away, and now she was picked up by a demon. She could only curse her unhappiness by how very unlucky she was.

“It's here! That red haired girl!”

The muscles of her back stood up.

Her trembling aggravated.

The owner of that voice was without doubt one of the men that were going after her before. With that, the street was becoming more turbulent.

Until the men showed up, it wouldn't be too long.

“Hey, brother. Can you hand over the girl there?”

“Why? Is this one your relative?”

“No, it is just a slave that ran away from my place. So, can you hand her over now?”

As he pointed his finger to Riku, he started saying a bunch of things.

Her body was urging her to run away.

But her legs were like two unmovable sticks. Even if they were to move, the strength to shake off Leivein's grasp and run away was lacking.^{6*}

Riku then timidly glanced at Leivein's face.

"Hou, then this is a slave?"

As he said that, he showed a smile that was atrocious to no bounds.

Riku, who had seen from very close his smile, had the fear she was feeling regarding the men that were after her blown off. But it didn't mean that she the fear had disappeared.

With those few words, with that expression... She was made known that that this demon was much scarier than the men. That said, even then, she didn't feel like running away to those men. Even if she went with them, it didn't seem like it would lead to a good thing.

Either of the options was hell to Riku.

"But, this is already mine. I don't intend to give it to you."

"What did you say?! ... Then, properly pay up. Hand over ten gold coins."

"Ten gold coins? Don't talk nonsense. It's only a brat that is about to die. Even if it is female, twenty silver coins should do it, no?"

Not caring about how Riku was trembling, Leivein was negotiating with the men nonchalantly.

"Twenty silver? Don't spout bullshit, you hobo!"

"At least one gold coin."

"As if I would need a person that is about to die pay me only one gold coin. Ahh, after you die, I can take the money from the insurance of your death instead, right? Though, I won't be killing you off that easily."

“What the heck are you saying?!*7(It is most likely Piguro the one that said this) “If only you would let me finish saying what I was going to...”

The men clenched their fists, and for those that were carrying it, they readied the blunt weapons.*8

It seem they intended to steal Riku back by force.

“It’s enough. Together with this little girl, we will sell you off as slaves.”

But it was too early to say such things.

The men started attacking, clearly aiming for Leivein. Leivein’s right hand was still grasping Riku. Aiming for both Riku’s and Leivein’s heads, the men were about to swing down their blunt weapons. Riku became scared and tightly closed her eyes.

“Even though you are just small fry.”

Then, Riku heard a sound of air being cut.

And together with that, a lukewarm liquid stuck to Riku’s face. Even with her eyes closed, it was obvious enough to know what it was about. She was able to tell that by this mood that seemed to make the surroundings vibrate.9*

“Ah, Leivein is always too fast when it is about these kind of things. Even though I was looking forward to killing them...”

Piguro’s astonished voice was heard.

Riku reluctantly opened her eyes. Leivein was showing a calm expression.

“It’s Leivein’s bad habit. Picking up abandoned people, you see. Now that he involved himself, he will take responsibility until the end... But, if you try to do anything weird, I will promptly break your neck, alright?”

Piguro was shaking his head while saying “good grief”.

Leivein remained silent.

“Y-YOU! What have you done!?”

One of the men’s trembling voice resounded.

When Riku looked towards the direction of the voice, she screamed.

What was there was a red sea that was spreading through the ground. Amidst this sea was the upper halves and lower halves of two men that were cut in half. One was the one coming with blunt weapon to hit them, while the other was one that intended to use his own fists. Because of the fear, Riku raised her eyes upwards, looking at the sky.

“What have I done, you say?”

Leivein snorted.

Without notice, he lightly shook of the blood of the blade that was on his left hand. At the point of the sword, there was still some of the blood sticking to it.

“The ones that attacked were you, wasn’t it? This is only self-defense, you see? What are you going to do about it?”

“Self-defense!? This is too much!!”

“Too much? These guys were weaker than me, and simply became dead bodies. That’s all there is to it.”

The man that heard Leivein’s response soon after came at him while shouting something. The knife that he was holding gave off a dim light.

“Just a little surprise attack... You, didn’t you see how your friends got killed? For what sake is your head attached to your body?”

Said Leivein with a bored tone.

Without hesitation, he swung down his sword and hit his

neck. The body that had lost its head stopped moving and as it sprayed blood, it fell down to that red sea. It was an overwhelming difference in power. In the end, the knife couldn't even get near Riku and Leivein.

Riku looked at the knife that was lying on the ground in surprise.

“Rinkus Barusak.”

Her name was called.

It felt like her heart was tightly held.

Leivein was still holding his sword with his left hand. That sword, could maybe be used to cut off her neck as well. As she thought of that, she could only become even more scared. Before noticing, Riku was once again trembling.

“If I leave you alone that way, you will end up getting caught by the friends of the fellows lying there. Your body and heart will tattered into pieces and you will end up having a pitiful and insignificant death.”

She was being lifted up by her neck almost as if it was going to be twisted. Resisting her fear, she was able to look ahead somewhat. Leivein's serious face was there in front of her eyes.

But even so, although the face he was making was supposed to be a serious one, she eventually stopped trembling after looking at him.

“If you are going to die anyway, then come at my place. As long as you have this life that had been saved, use your power for the demon lord army and die for its sake.”

Leivein's words that seemed like a death sentence was very scary.

But different from the fear Riku had experienced before, maybe it could be said that her fear had actually lessened up a

bit.

Riku was perplexed by it as she wondered why.

“If you do that, I can at least guarantee to provide you with life necessities.”

Leivein's blue eyes then became overlapped with the radiant blue sky.

What was left from the fire called hope was little by little being relighted. Although her heart was supposed to be cold, somewhere in there, it was becoming warm. The moment her trembling completely stopped, she understood...

That for now, she was saved.

Names:

レーヴェン: Leivein

ピグロ: Piguro

魔王軍: Demon Lord army

Chapter 4

The Hidden Village of the Dragon Demon Garrison

Demons are a lowly barbarians. They are similar only in appearance, but are not human. Part of their bodies have bizarre bestial aspects and they are rabid like beasts. They have already destroyed many countries, and by their hands, in the end, even the Shiidoru kingdom befell. The reigning king of those days, Fifus Shiidoru was a very kind king, but in the face of the approaching demon lord army, there was only one conclusion.

“I can’t bear see the country being invaded and how people are suffering.”

The kind king Fifus proposed peace.

Together with only a few troops, he went to the demon territory to attend to an audience. But in the place where the audience was supposed to happen, the Demon Lord decapitated the defenseless king. In cold-blood, he discarded the path to peace that the Shiidoru king was reaching out for. The demons that don’t know the word “negotiation” marched towards the capital without any concerns for what happened.

With resolve, the king’s eldest son, Shikus Shiidoru decided put his life on line. He decided that since all was lost, then, they should fight to the end for the sake of the remaining surviving citizens.

But the spiritualist families were against such idea

“If the king dies, the people living within the kingdom die as

well. We can't win against the demon lord, but if we are able to seal him, then this should delay their invasion."

The prince Shikus accepted the proposal of the spiritualist families.

Together with five spiritualists, he had gone to seal the demon lord.

The prince Shikus' party battled against the demon lord in a death match that extended to three days and three nights. In the fourth day, at the sunrise, they were finally able to achieve piercing the sealing sword through the demon lord.

While spouting words full of resentment, the demon lord finally stopped moving.

Since the demon lord's sealing, the demon lord's army had lost its command and became disorganized. The demons that had only intelligence of animals wouldn't be able to act with intelligence until they raised their next ruler. The demons that were now bit by bit crumbling down were all hunted down by prince Shikus and the spiritualists.

With the demon retreating, the Shiidoru kingdom attained its peace.

However, the demon lord still wasn't dead.

Since then, the families of those five spiritualists had been guarding the place the Demon Lord had been sealed.

[Shiidoru kingdom's publication on the spiritualist military story, extracted from the volume of the sealing of the Demon Lord]

It was several days since they left Perikka city.

While desperately moving her feet, Riku kept thinking.

She couldn't keep up with Piguro and Leivein, who were

walking ahead of her, very well. Even when she got her foot stuck in a tree root, or when she would fall down and get hurt, they wouldn't give a glance. Instead, they would keep walking through the forest.

Maybe if she stopped, they would leave her behind. But strangely, the thought of running away didn't come to her mind. Even if they were the demons that could easily kill humans, they considered her something needed. To meet those expectations, Riku earnestly kept moving her feet.

“ ... ”

Riku looked at Leivein's back.

After killing the men, he gave Riku food and water. He also treated her injuries. Whether it is pain or cold, she wasn't feeling either anymore.

But after that, he didn't speak one word to her. Piguro, who was walking next to him, would at best look at her like she was some dirty thing, but in Leivein's case, he didn't even look at her.

That's why Riku was getting anxious. Even though it wasn't cold anymore, somehow, she ended up feeling cold somewhere.

Maybe it was actually better to only think about the vantages of food and housing she would get with them.

“Ah, we are finally here. Even though I was hoping she wouldn't make it...”

Piguro, which walked a bit further ahead murmured in a tired way.

Both Leivein and Piguro stopped walking, and so, so did Riku. Apparently, the forest ended here. The both of them were taller than Riku, so she wasn't able to see what was ahead through the forest from the position she was at that moment.

“Riku, come here.”

“Y-Yes!”

Leivein’s sudden words went through Riku.

Hearing that voice she hadn’t heard for some time, she vaguely felt a warm feeling. Riku cheerfully went next to him.

Seeing the sight that was located in the deeper parts of that forest, she unconsciously let out a surprised voice.

“Waah!”

What was there was a town within a valley.

The very steep cliff walls that were as if it had been shaved off, had many deep holes dug through it. The places that seemed to be entrances had each a cloth with a pattern Riku had never seen hanged in front of it. They were probably being used as dividers. Another remarkable thing was the flag with a dragon drawn on it fluttering with the wind.

It was different from what Riku was expecting from a demon city. She imagined a little remote and desolate village because of her bias. Even so, the village that ascended through the cliff wall in front of her was still something that she could accept as a demon village if someone were to tell her that it was. That was because that was a hidden village away from human villagers and surrounded by cliffs in the middle of nowhere.

“Is here a demon village?”

“No, it isn’t.”

Leivein said as he shook his head.

And then, they calmly came closer to the village.

Riku was walking as if she was trying to hide behind Leivein’s shadow.

Within the open field which was surrounded by the cliffs,

there were muscular demons polishing their sword techniques. There were also demons drawing their bows and hitting targets. Demons clashing against each other fist to fist, making one another bleed, was another thing seen there.

There were also demons that, by being kicked, were sent flying all the way to the rock wall of the cliff. There were demons that, while vomiting blood, were being attacked by demons that seemed to be their instructors.

Yes, the demons were doing battle training.

“Ah, captain Leivein!”

Just as Leivein got closer to him, the muscular demons went on their knees right away.

Riku was immediately taken back. Leivein’s stature was only more or less higher than Riku’s. Even so, to Leivein, who couldn’t be considered anything more than a youth, many muscular demons lowered their heads.

“Welcome back, captain Leivein!!!!!!”

“Hm.”

To Leivein, it was nothing more than an usual spectacle. The expression on his face didn’t change even one bit.

Riku, without knowing what to do, while hiding behind Leivein, looked at the demons who were all bowing down. As she did that, she ended up exchanging glances with a demon that had a wolf head. The wolf headed demon narrowed his eyes as if he was surprised by something and his nose started to move as he was sniffing something.

“Captain, who is this little girl? For some reason, she smells like human.”

“Yes, she is human.”

Without hiding anything, Leivein declared.

Right at that moment, the demons that were bowing down before all stood up at the same time. All of them were the same as to what kind of looks they were giving to Riku. There were some that were even showing their teeth. That feeling that was as if each part of their body was like a blade full of killing intent, although it didn't completely overwhelm her, it still wasn't something possible to bear. Riku unconsciously started to step back.

"There is nothing to be scared of, Riku. It is only killing intent."

Leivein said as he kept looking ahead unfazed.

But even if one were to say to not be scared of that, rather, not being scared of it is what was weird. But even so, Leivein's orders were absolute. From the time he got hold of her name, she couldn't disobey his words.

With that, while still trembling, Riku held her ground.

"Here is the fourth army's first battalion base, which I am in command of... It is normally called the Garrison of the Dragon Demon Battalion. In times of peace, it provides war training."

"Captain Leivein!"

The wolf headed demon from before raised his voice.

He had called for Leivein, but his eyes were still on Riku.

"Captain! This one is human. Don't tell me captain Leivein intends to have her as your subordinate!"

"Five-men leader Vrusto, do you have eyes for nothing? It's obvious I am doing so."

"Wha!?"

"This one is a human. One overflowing with talent."

"I'm firmly against it!!"

Vrusto was tightly clenching his hands into a fist.

Riku was startled. From the gap between his fingers, a bit of blood was flowing out. She wondered how much power he was putting in clenching his hand.

“Humans are scoundrels. Throughout all those hundreds of years, they’ve been oppressing us demons. Did you forget that they sealed the Demon Lord just when he was unarmed for their audience to negotiate peace? They even put the blame of the death of their king onto the Demon Lord!!”

“Eh?”

Riku was wondering if she had heard correctly.

Those words were completely the opposite of all that story she had kept hearing throughout her whole life.

Seeing her surprised face, Vrusto sneered at her.

“See? Please, look at her. She is even playing dumb; this little girl. Even if such type of people were to join in, there won’t be any meaning to it. Moreover, that brooch on her clothes... Isn’t it exactly like the crest from that famous spiritualist family?”

“That’s right, captain! This girl is definitely trying to trick you!”

“First of all, that red haired brat feels kind of repugnant. I have no idea what captain could even be thinking to do that.”

“Please, reconsider this.”

To Vrusto’s words that kept coming were followed by the words of other demons that were beside him. Each of those words pierced through her heart deeper and deeper. It felt as if they were squeezing her. She hesitantly looked at Leivein’s face.

While the words from the demon’s were coming, Leivein closed his eyes. From his expression, it was impossible to make

out anything except that the mood of the situation was getting colder and colder.

The warmth from before went away as if it wasn't there from the beginning. Right now, Riku was so cold, but so cold that it was as if everything had been to no use.

If this keeps up like that and Riku ends up being driven away, what would she be supposed to do?

"I see. Indeed, there is some truth to it. But this one can be useful. Therefore, I will recruit her. That's all. And you all guys hear it out clearly. No matter her origin or race, from this day, she is one of the Dragon Demon Battalion."

As Leivein declared that, Vrusto became perplexed.

The others that were supporting Vrusto were also surprised as they looked at Leivein. Without caring about their expressions, Leivein indifferently announced.

"Five-men leader Vrusto, I will bother you to be the one in charge of taking care of her. Properly train her."

"What!? Mee!!?"

"Don't complain. Just do it."

Leivein then finally gave a glance to Riku.

The vivid blue eyes reflected the figure of a little Riku on them. As she noticed it, in order to see it better, she fixed her posture.

"The victorious side can change the past to their convenience. Your ancestors won against the demon lord. That's why we, who lost, got our history tainted. That is the same for your hair. It's very uncommon, and so, no matter how beautiful it is, it will be despised. The weak people and the strong minority can't go against a group of strong people. That's all there is to it. Make sure to remember this."

And then, he patted her head.

While Leivein was gently stroking her red hair...

“You must overpower all that opposes you. I am expecting a lot from you, Riku.”

After only saying that, together with Piguro, he left the area.

All Riku and the other demons who remained could do was to see them walk away while still being dumbfounded. But then, one by one, each went back to each one's respective activity. And then, only Riku and Vrusto were left.

“Really... But if it is captain's Leivein's orders, it can't be helped. But again, why the heck did he bring something like a human. Captain sure have weird hobbies, huh... Hey, brat! Come here.”

While scratching his head, Vrusto shouted.

It was possible to hear a few complaints being muttered, but none of them entered Riku's ears. She touched the place where Leivein had patted her, and then looked back to the direction where he left to.

Demons are bad people.

Their appearance were different from humans and they had a scary glare.

Moreover, the history of the past they knew was different from the history she had been told.

But even so, she, who didn't have anywhere to go, was given a place to belong to. Only, it was forcefully done so.

Those demons... Were they good demons?

No, there was no way there would be good demons. Seeing the fiendish side on how , without hesitation, the men from before had been cut into pieces, there was no way to say that good demons exist.

Inside her head, Riku became surrounded by many doubts.

“If you keep wasting time there, I will kill you, brat!!”

With Vrusto angry shout, Riku came back to her senses.

Since a little ago, Vrusto was waiting for Riku. With how he was stomping the ground with his feet many times, it was obvious that he was in a bad mood.

“Y-yes, I’m coming!”

Whether that demon was a good person or a bad person was something she didn’t know.

She didn’t know it well, but for now, she needed to leave those thoughts to later.

In the end, Riku didn’t have anywhere to go. And so, she wanted to at least try to give her best, since here, there was somebody that accepted her own self, even if it was only by a little bit. And by only that, she felt that now things would go well.

Putting her hand onto her for the first time praised red hair, she went running.

Note:

I have doubts on using battalion as the translation for that army stuff. More or less according to future chapters, at that point in time, they should have the amount of soldiers for it to be a battalion... (as far as I googled it^^) There is also the five-men leader... I couldn’t find a proper name for it, but I guess five-men leader is enough for one to understand what it is about, right?? Of course, if someone comes up with a better name for it, then I will be renaming.

Names:

ヴルスト: Vrusto

龍鬼隊: Dragon Demon Battalion

龍鬼隊の駐屯地: Garrison of the Dragon Demon Battalion
(why no proper name ;-; maybe the battalion is so
awesome they nicknamed the garrison after them ^^)

Chapter 5

The Sharpened Sword and the Thrown Away Sword

Following after Vrusto, Riku arrived at a cave.

Pushing away the cloth that was in front of the entrance, they went inside it. The place was dimly dark. It was somewhat chilly too. Right as Riku started rubbing her own arms, Vrusto laughed with his nose.

“Is it really so cold you can’t even stand it?”

“Five-men leader Vrusto, isn’t it cold for you?”

“Not even a bit. It’s because I am covered in fur... Hey, here.”

With his hand, Vrusto signed her to come in a rude manner.

As she came closer, she noticed in there was a great variety of weapons side-by-side. Because it was somewhat dark, she didn’t know well, but starting from swords, there were spears, axes and weapons that looked like bows tightly organized next to each other. It seemed like that cave was an armory.

“Anything inside here is fine. Choose the one you think you can handle the best.”

“Uhh... But it’s dark and I can’t see very well.”

“Do you want me to light a fire for you? Stupid, what do we do if it lights up the gunpowder? Well, most of demons can see well in the dark, so this level of darkness usually wouldn’t have been much of a thing.”

To Vrusto’s blunt response, Riku didn’t say anything else.

As expected demons and humans were very different. But if that is the case, why was it that Leivein had chosen to take

Riku into his battalion? Next time, she decided she should try asking that if possible. As Riku was thinking about that, her eyes laid on a certain weapon.

“It can be any weapon, right?”

“Yeah... By the way, have you ever even touched a weapon?”

“More or less.”

From a very early age, in order to fight against demons, she had been practicing to use varied arms.

She had trained with them, although she couldn't imbue the weapon with spiritual power. As she remembered her training, she became kind of solitary. Her father wasn't there to train her anymore. Because she was now a member of the demon army, it was now completely impossible for her to visit the Barusak residence. Meeting her father, or her little brother, or her a bit prideful older sister; all of it was now impossible. Whether it was her impression or not, she felt her view blurring a bit.

“Hey, choose something. Stop wasting time.”

“...Yes.”

Riku rubbed her eyes with the sleeves of her clothes. And then, she started to look for a weapon.

Thinking back of the weapon most easy to handle at the training, she tried touching many two-handed swords. But because she had trained many times with the same sword, she couldn't find anything that felt like it matched her. Putting the swords back, she looked overhead. Up there in the corner, she fixed her eyes on a certain spear. With a single glance, one would think it was very much like a spear. However, right on the tip of the spear, there were attached an sharp axe shaped blade and the hook at the other side. Right at the moment Riku saw the tip, unconsciously...

“A halberd!”

She unconsciously shouted.

Just by the appearance of the weapon, it was cool, but because it could not only cut, but also thrust, sweep, and other things, that it was possible to fight in many different ways with the weapon. But its flexibility also demands a lot of ability to handle the weapon. Actually, among the spiritualists of the Barusak household, the amount of people that could properly use the weapon were very few.

Since long ago Riku, liked halberds. As she would play with a training halberd made of wood, she would be always imagining that when she became a spiritualist, she would wield a halberd to fight off the demons.

The dream of her wielding a halberd perhaps would actually come true.

“I will chose this one.”

Riku took the halberd to her hand.

The very heavy weight weighted down onto her arms. It was many times heavier than the training halberd she had made at home. But, strangely, the weight felt very well fit. Besides, if it was this level of heaviness, then it was something that she would eventually get used to. Knowing the basics of spear wielding, she tried to lightly spin it in her hand. With that, the sound of air being cut was possible to be heard. She felt like there was nothing more perfect than that.

“What? You will choose this one?”

Vrusto raised his voice intensity by one level.

“Don’t choose this one. It is too hard for you.”

“I will learn.”

“It’s not at the level of managing to use it somehow just by

learning it. For starters, it should be something like that sword, or maybe a spear.”

“Thank you. But it’s fine for me. When I was still at home, I used to train with a training halberd. Besides, you told me to choose anything I wanted, right?”

“Well, certainly it kinda feels fitting on you... Ok, change your clothes there. After changing your clothes, go to the place marked on the map. It will be training.”

As Vrusto gave a big sigh, he threw to Riku some kind of package.

As she caught the packadge with the hook of the halberd, without saying anything, Vrusto left the place. Opening the package, inside there were clothes and something that seemed to be a map. Stretching the clothes, she noticed that it was the same kind of military clothes Vrusto was wearing. Because of the darkness, she wasn’t certain of its color, but if it was the same as the one Vrusto was wearing, it should be dark green. Changing into the clothes, when she passed her arm through the sleeves, she noticed they were a bit long to her. But it still wasn’t to the extend which she would need to fold the sleeves. Finishing wearing the uniform, she moved the halberd to her shoulder.

“Alright.”

After leaving the armory, using the map given by Vrusto, she started walking, heading to the place.

On the way, she has been given glances, but when she would look at the direction of those glances, there wouldn’t be anybody looking at her anymore. All there would be was demons that were doing nothing but sword training. While thinking how strange it was, Riku reached to the place it was marked in the map.

In the center of that place that was similar to some kind of

arena, Vrusto was swinging some kind of wooden sword. Before Riku could say anything, Vrusto's nose moved. And then, turning to her direction, he pointed the tip of the sword to her. Right away, Riku readied her halberd. Vrusto laughed using his nose as he saw Riku's defensive stance.

"You came, brat. Let's start this training at once."

Vrusto threw to her direction a wooden weapon. In its tip, there were the axe and hook parts of the halberd which were made of wood. It was a wooden halberd. Riku made a discontent face.

"This is a training halberd?"

"It's better like that. This is training after all. See? I am going to use one against you too."

Vrusto was showing a provocative smile.

Riku left her halberd lying on the ground and readied herself with the wooden halberd. If it was a training halberd, then she had already used it many times. That's why she thought everything would be fine somehow. Deciding where to aim, she rushed at Vrusto aiming for his neck.

But Vrusto, as he was showing a carefree smile, lightly stroke the halberd away. Although it was lightly hit, the trajectory of the halberd changed. Then, without mercy he hit Riku, who was still trying to recover the direction of her weapon, right at her arm.

"It hurts!"

Because the shock and the pain that went through her arm, Riku let go of her halberd.

But even so, Vrusto didn't stop attacking. Aiming at the now unarmed Riku's belly, he kicked her with all his strength. With the blow, Riku had lost some air from her lungs. With no time to suffer from the pain, a strong force went through her back.

She was thrown all the way to the wall.

Her belly and back hurt, and her arm too. It wasn't as much as that time when she was at Perikka, but it still hurt so much that it felt like tears would start coming out of her eyes.

"Stop wasting time. Stand up already and come!"

Vrusto once again pointed his training weapon to Riku.

Riku unsteadily got up. She trained so much before, but even so for some reason her feet and arms weren't doing well enough. At the time she was still doing training at the Barusak household, it had always been said of her that her spiritual arts were very lacking, but even so, that her physical strength was reasonably good. But even so, not even one attack went through him. Vrusto gave a look at Riku as if he was troubled.

"Certainly compared to human brats, you are superior. But..."

Immediately after she picked the wooden halberd up, Vrusto's training sword was already closing up to her.

Riku panicked. Putting her strength in her halberd, she somehow pushed the blow aside. But right after that, she felt a strong blow to her belly even though she had properly defended the training sword. Due to her intense pain, she crouched while putting her hands onto her belly. And finally...

"Why...?"

This word had left her mouth.

As she moved her eyes up a bit, she saw Vrusto in a posture which he had his right knee raised up. In the end, it seemed that the pain was from the knee strike he had done. But even so, Riku couldn't understand. The kick from before and the knee from this time... It happened even though they were doing training with weapons. She wondered why would he use such moves.

As if he had read her mind, Vrusto laughed at her as if he was looking down on her.

“You are wondering why I used kicks and the sort, right? Stupid. The technique you are using is only for fencing. From now on, you will be going to the battlefield. There, you won’t need cute techniques. Put this onto your head!”

Vrusto lightly swung his training sword.

Despite how she was crouched down now, the sword was quickly approaching. Rolling on the ground, Riku evaded the attack. Picking up her own weapon, she tried to somehow defend once again from the next attack. She frowned at the weight of the blow that was put on her weapon. It was possible to hear the floor cracking by the force that was onto her feet. Because of all the weight, she was starting to hear cracking sounds from her arms. While gritting her teeth, she somehow was able to resist. As she did so, Vrusto whistled, pleased with what happened.

“Hou, you defended. Then, what about this?”

Right at the corner of her field of vision, she noticed Vrusto moving his left foot.

Then, Riku instantly jumped back. It was just how much she didn’t want to be kicked at her belly again. But his right foot, without even being aimed at her, just like that, was put down to the ground. Vrusto, who was leaning forward, was now aiming for Riku’s legs. Just as Riku landed, she was hit and lost her balance.

“Waah!”

Tripping up, Riku fell down in an unsightly manner.

An excruciating pain was echoing from her spine through her whole body. Her vision was gradually becoming blur. Riku’s whole body was in so much pain that she couldn’t bear. If it

was the Riku from before, she would have probably screamed and cried. But she knew that now, if it was just this much, she shouldn't do this sort of things.

Before Vrusto could provoke her, she unsteadily got up. While straining her feet to keep standing, she readied her halberd, full of fighting spirit. While lowering her stance, she was deciding where to aim.

“Hee, you can still stand up? I wonder until when you will be able to keep this up.”

At a nice timing, Vrusto swung his weapon. Aiming at Riku's flank, he swung his sword down. Riku, who could only keep looking to the front, without being able to react received the blow. The pain, which would remain unvoiced, ran from her flank to the whole body. While tightly holding her halberd, she fell down to the ground.

Kicking Riku, who fell down to the ground, Vrusto said.

“Listen to this, alright? Never lose your composure. You must only think on how to kill your opponent!

“ ... ”

Riku half opened her eyes and looked at Vrusto's movement. Out of boredom, Vrusto was tapping his shoulder with his training sword. He must have thought that Riku wouldn't be able to get up for some time. He was now uninterestedly looking at the sky.

Then, her mouth was formed into a smile.

To only think on ways to kill your opponent. All she had learned until now was how to infuse spiritual power onto equipment and how to use such equipment. The formal way to use weapons was almost like an already decided rule. If she were to get older, perhaps, she would have learned more practical forms, but she was thrown out before being able to

reach to this point.

“Really, for you to not be able to stand up again... In the end, humans are humans...”

Out of boredom, he started to whistle.

With aim to Vrusto’s legs, tightly holding her halberd, she thrust it at him, who was now slacking. Because of the surprise from the sudden attack that came from bellow, Vrusto unsightly raised his voice. Using this chance, she got up in a way that looked as if she had jumped.

“Take this!!”

Aiming for the unguarded private parts, Riku swung her fist and hit there.

Vrusto, who took such a direct hit, twisted his face in pain. It must have hurt a lot, she had thought. With bulging eyes, Vrusto’s full of fur face became twisted. He leaned over as he was holding his private parts. Lowering her weapon, Riku felt as if she did something unforgivable. But she didn’t really do anything wrong. Vrusto said to only think in ways to kill the opponent. He didn’t only use his weapon, but also used kicks and so.

That’s why Riku decided to think she didn’t do anything wrong...

But hearing his groans, she started to doubt whether she actually did the right thing.

“Uhh... Are you alright?”

“If it seems like I am alright, then you are fucking blind.”

Looking at Vrusto’s eyes, it was possible to see his tears shining.

Riku averted her eyes from Vrusto. She started feeling like running away from this awkward situation. But before

anything, right at the corner of her vision, there was a blow coming. Even though she had her weapon lowered down, Riku immediately shoved aside the incoming blow.

“Tch, you avoided it.”

The one attacking was none other than Vrusto, who was a few moments ago groaning on the ground.

Riku was making a surprised face.

“Are you alright?”

“Stupid. There is no way I am alright! It hurts to the point of making me want to cry!! If you can’t handle this much, you would just die in real battles!!”

Vrusto’s sword was being aimed at her neck.

Receiving the blow with the hook, she tried to kick Vrusto at his belly. But right away, her foot was caught, and then she was thrown away.”

“Don’t just go for kicks!! You gotta think your next moves!”

Vrusto’s angry yell were resounding through the training site.

From then on, it isn’t known for how much time this carried on. It was all pretty much just swinging weapons and Riku being hit, kicked and sent flying. But even so, with determination, she kept standing up again and keeping it up. This, countless times repeating it.

“Well then, that’s it for today.”

When Vrusto finally declared that, the sun was already setting.

The sky to the west was faintly red and the first stars were already possible to be seen. Riku exhaustedly sat down.

“Tomorrow, we will be continuing on with that. Hey, for now, go take a bath. After that, it will be dinner.”

And then, Vrusto threw a towel to her.

A white towel fell down onto Riku's head. It was worn out by its long use, but even so, it was a very clean white towel. Riku then timidly looked to Vrusto.

"Hmmm? What is it, brat? I will already be saying, but the only reason why I'm taking care of you is all because captain Leivein ordered me to. Otherwise, there would be no way for me to be bothered by some human brat. You should be thanking the captain."

After saying that, Vrusto left the place to somewhere,

In the training arena, only Riku was left. Using her wooden halberd to get up, she grasped the towel.

Then, looking forward to go to the bath, she started going her way, but suddenly had to stop.

"Ah... I forgot to ask where the bathing place is..."

With those words not being heard by anyone, her silhouette vanished within the dark sunset.

—————

A few hours later, on that same day, through the royal capital, there was a small shadow running.

Even though it was already very dark at night, the person was using a hat to hide the face. The shadow was vigorously running through a back-alley. In the shadow's small hands, there was a letter that had been crumpled to a paper ball.

The name of that person was Kurumi. Behind the hat, were long squirrel ears hidden; ones that only demons would have. She was a girl that was tasked on infiltrating the capital's taverns. Because the taverns would gather guards serving the nearby castles and spiritualists, it was the perfect place to gather information for the Demon Lord's army. While doing

simple chores, that girl, who would gather information at all those nights, including this one, with all her efforts, was finally able to find an information that could be influential to the demon lord's army.

"Finally... I was finally obtained something. With that, I can finally say farewell to going to those alcohol stinking places! Going back to the demon capital, I can finally live in a house that doesn't have cracks and holes blowing cold wind!"

"Unfortunately, that's as far as you will go."

But suddenly a person blocking Kurumi's path appeared.

Waking up from her happiness, contrary to her previous feelings, the feeling of the danger that appeared dominated her. And then, Kurumi looked at the girl that appeared in front of her eyes. The girl that stood there had a mismatching appearance to that alcohol stinking back-alley.

It was a big breasted maid with a broom in her hands whose breast size was so big it made one want to ask whether she was actually using fillings. Even Kurumi, who didn't have much interest in clothes, knew how high level the quality of the maid clothes the maid in front of her was using were.

"What?"

"Regarding the information which you obtained, I have something to talk with you."

The big breasted maid was step by step closing in the distance between them. While she tightly held the letter, she started to step back. That information was one that, no matter what, she needed to report. Her little head started to work on thinking how to run away from that situation.

"No Mary, I want to talk to her myself."

From behind the big breasted maid, there was a voice that had an intellectual feeling to it.

With the appearance of that other person, Kurumi unconsciously put her guard up. She readied herself so that she could immediately use the knife secretly hidden inside her sleeve at any time. At the worst possible occasion, she would need to directly confront them to open a path of escape. On her forehead, a single drop of sweat flowed down.

“B-but! Even though it is a young one, the opponent is a demon. It might be dangerous to young master.”

“It’s fine Mary. Because she is certainly a kind-hearted demon.”

Saying that, the one that was behind the big breasted maid finally appeared.

It was a child wearing very expensive clothes and with an elegant appearance. As she saw that, Kurumi ended up putting a perplexed face. She was certain that he would be a bit older, but he was actually a child even younger than her. His hands were so small that he would most likely not be able to even properly hold a sword. It started to feel stupid how Kurumi had her guard up before.

“Kind-hearted? Who are you talking about?”

“It’s obvious that it is about you, right? Because with your power, you could have already broke through us. But even so, you waited to hear us out. While you could have already attacked us, you instead want all to end peacefully. You... Your true thoughts actually are that you don’t want to hurt anybody.”

“Wha-?Th-There is no way it is like that!”

By that child’s nonsense talking, Kurumi blushed.

Without doubt, she was angry. Being said she was someone like that made Kurumi so embarrassed that she couldn’t stand. In denial to that child’s words, she took out her knife.

“I’m not kind-hearted or something like that!! Specially to you humans!!”

She then planned to cut through the child and deliver the information at once.

Aiming for the child and the maid, she dashed forward. But...

“Ehh?”

Right after the moment she had thought about it, her arm was seized by the child. Because of the sudden scene, Kurumi was taken by the surprise. She didn’t notice the movements of that child. It could only mean that the child was faster than her. Kurumi didn’t know what was happening. Right next to Kurumi’s ears, the child whispered.

To the point of being unimaginable for a child, it was a very kind and enchanting voice.

“You closed your eyes, you know? When you pointed that knife to us.”

“Such a thing...”

Being told something she didn’t even notice herself, Kurumi was dumbfounded. Even the knife that slipped off her hand went by unnoticed to her.

“I know the real you. If you don’t really want to hurt anybody, then this war itself... If it is me... No, if you and me cooperate, we can stop this war. That’s why I have something to ask you.”

The moment the sound of the knife falling down reverberated through the back-alley. Something inside Kurumi had changed.

Kurumi herself didn’t notice, but now the bloodlust in her eyes from before wasn’t there anymore. The blush in her cheeks changed into something that wasn’t anger.

“I understand... But... I really need to report this information.”

“Yes, I know. So, from the information there, I need you to only take a single word from it.”

Near Kurumi's ear, the child whispered something. Looking at it in other way, it was like lovers whispering love words. One could only wonder what thoughts the maid had when seeing this scene. With her face red, the big breasted maid cleared her throat, interrupting.

“Young master, you are flirting with her too much.”

“Ah, sorry Mary.”

Like a wave going back to the sea after having been blown to the shore, he distanced himself from Kurumi.

Because of the fading warmth, Kurumi showed a bit solitary expression.

“I understand... I will do as you say. But... Before I go, tell me one thing. What is your name?”

Kurumi looked at the boy which was being now carried by the big breasted maid's arms.

Showing a smile comparable to a angel, he said with a very gentle voice.

“I am Rook Barusak. Nice to meet you, Kurumi-chan.”

Being carried by the maid, he was brought out of the back-alley. While thinking back to those words said by Rook before, she also left the place. But now, the strength that was put into holding the letter wasn't as much as the amount from a little ago.

“Quickly... I need to report this information.”

But this murmur wasn't regarding the matter of the Demon Lord army.

And at the back-alley nobody remained, the forgotten knife was giving off a solitary shine.

Note:

I've been using training/wooden sword/halberd although in the japanese written story, 棒 is used. This means that there is a chance of what Vrusto was using was actually just a wooden stick. There isn't really much problems imagining the scene in japanese, but literally translated, this棒 just feels wrong since, for instance, if the word stick was used, people would imagine a thin and long piece of wood. If pole was used, people would think an extra long one. *Etc.* But even so, in japanese, any of those is correct for this word. I didn't find any synonym for a simple wooden pole-like stuff that seemed to fit to what one would think it would be used for training that really suited, and besides, it was probably a training sword anyway, so I decided to just put training sword.

Chapter 6

If Only It Was a Dream

Many days had passed since Riku came to live in the garrison.

There were no problems regarding basic life necessities. Her life style improved in all the ways comparing to the time she was at Perikka city.

But this place still didn't feel like home to her.

She would always notice many gazes onto her when she would go to the dining hall.

While looking with a cold and disapproving gaze, they would come near one another and start a talk between only themselves. But there wasn't anyone that would talk to Riku. Of course, there was an exception. It was only Vrusto, who was tasked with taking care of her, that talked to her. But it seemed that it was all because of her position, since because she was his subordinate, Vrusto was ordered to let her be beside him.

Riku got used to Vrusto's strict training. She could bear the pain from the training without problems, but even so, she still couldn't get used to the looks of complete despise she would be given.

"Humans are very much hated..."

As she was moving the spoon with soup to her mouth, she casually muttered.

Vrusto, who was sitting next to Riku, seemingly having heard her murmurs, he let out a long sigh while he was playing with his knife.

"Well, that's obvious. Until now, they've been oppressing us

demons. Besides, you are from that spiritualist family, right? It would be much stranger if they actually didn't hate you... By me, if it weren't for the captain's orders, I wouldn't be babysitting you."

"Babysitting...I'm already seven years old."

"Seven years old is just a brat. Don't worry about it and just finish eating. After that, it will be training."

"...Yes."

Riku moved the spoon to her mouth once again.

Bit by bit, she was becoming able to land hits on Vrusto, but there still was the experience gap. Things weren't going that well. Every time Riku would press forward for an attack, Vrusto would answer her with the double or triple of what her offensive would be. It would inevitably become a one-sided defensive battle that only if Vrusto was to get careless or if Riku was able to properly do a feint that she would be able to land a hit.

Leivein said that she had talent, but recently, Riku had been a bit uneasy about that. She would wonder whether she really did have talent.

"Your spoon stopped moving... Properly eat up. If you faint during the training, it will be only problems to me, you know? Or what? Do you hate this soup?"

"No...That's not it..."

Riku used her spoon to touch the very thin chunk of meat in her soup.

At her time when she was still living at the Barusak household, she had never seen such a meat and vegetables only soup like that. There were a bit more vegetables in it and the meat pieces were a bit bigger. As she would take a bite of it, the meat juices would perfectly fit the soup and be very delicious.

She accepted that as long as she had something to eat, it was enough. But to the still seven years old Riku, this made her miss how her life used to be before.

“Then, what is it? Ah, that’s it. Are you bothered about the meat?”

Vrusto laughed.

The fangs, that were like they were looking at her, were shining. Riku kind of felt a chill.

“If you don’t want it, then give it to me. Meat is the thing we demons most love anyhow.”

Riku warily looked at the meat.

The thin piece of meat that was reflecting on the spoon.

“Demons...Most love...?”

The thing demons most love.

The thing demons most cherished.

In other words, it was something appreciated by demons and it was something to eat.

If one were to ask about a meat that they would boil, roast and eat, it would be...

“Ugh!!”

At this exact moment, deep in her throat, something sour was welling up.

The real identity of the meat came to her mind. Putting her hands onto her mouth, she tried to repress herself from crying. If that was the thing demons liked the most, then this would be none other than a certain something. Since she had come here, from all these days, there wasn’t one day she didn’t eat meat. This meant that all this time, she had been eating...

“He-hey, don’t be so startled like that! This is only pork meat.

The part more to the interior of the training place there is a pig farm, you know.”

“Eh, pig?”

“Yes, pig. If you are so much bothered by that, what about going there to take a look before training?”

Vrusto was showing a shocked expression. Absentminded, Riku opened her mouth. The nausea slowly settled out. She was certain she ended up eating someone of her same race and was falling into self-hatred, but fortunately for her, it seemed this wasn't the case. Finally at ease, she ate the meat.

“You are too biased about demons. We hate humans, but we don't just go eat them, you know?...Actually...Brat, have you ever eaten a demon?”

“...No.”

“Right? That's the same case. There is no way for us to go eat either demons or humans.”

As she was drinking her soup with her spoon, she started to think about all he said.

On text books and picture books, it was written that demons ate humans. Many times, she had read this on them and her father would tell her that as well.

But the reality was different. Riku also thought about the possibility of Vrusto lying, but thinking about his behavior, it didn't look like he was doing so.

Then, would that mean both her father and the textbooks were lying?

She didn't want to doubt her father, and also didn't want to think he was lying. Riku felt like she didn't know anything anymore. She was opening her mouth, about to ask a question to Vrusto, but right at that moment, a sharp voice sounded

through the dining hall.

“Hear it out!!”

The door was widely left open.

Because of the angle of the light, she wasn't able to see the person well, but there was a small shadow and a big shadow made by the people standing there. She wasn't able to see their faces, but by the voice, she knew who it was. As she was about to look at the owner of the voice, she felt an impact on the back of her head.

“Stupid! Lower down your head already!”

Vrusto forcibly pressed her head down.

Looking with the edge of her eyes, she noticed all the demons gathered in the dining hall were bowing down to those shadows. All the demons that were forged into having good physiques all at once bowed their head to the small shadow. Although the shadow was small, the presence given by it was by far much greater than the big shadow behind.

The small shadow... Leivein, with a step, entered the dining hall. Then, Leivein opened his mouth.

“Everybody lift up your heads. We are moving out.”

The Shiidoru kingdom at its best splendor.

With the outstanding power of the four spiritualist families, they were able to quickly uproot the sprout of evil called demons before it grew.

Everybody showing a smile and nobody suffering from unhappiness. The marvelous kingdom as a flower in its full blossom, and its sole flaw could be said to be the clock bomb the demon lord that have been sealed there was.

In this Shiidoru kingdom, every year once, there was a event

done as a custom.

It was called the [Demon cleaning campaign].

The absolutely wicked demons; its remains would affect the peace by their certain questionable actions. Many villages and cities would be invaded, things would be set on fire and food would be stolen. For men, they would be used as slaves, for women, they would be raped, and for children, they would be thrown into their soup and ultimately end up killed. At the time when the fires of war spread, the spiritualists employed by the royalty would specifically advance to their bases and all at once launch an attack.

And then, they would dignifiedly come back to the capital victorious.

...Carrying many demon heads.

Riku has seen this parade before.

In its center, she would see her father. Standing in a carriage covered in flowers, the figure of him majestically waving his hands to the public was something she aspired for. She could only wonder how many necks the halberd in his hand had cut. It was haughty just to imagine. It was something that really soothed her heart. She decided to become an renowned spiritualist just like how her father was.

That vow she made herself... She would always remember it well; it was a very bright memory.

It was supposed to be a good memory.

“Could it be that... All that were only schemes of the kingdom?”

Riku muttered surprised.

The place the Dragon Demon Garrison are sending five hundred soldiers is already expected to fall by the attacks of

the spiritualists. Without the spiritualists knowing, they were to secretly get to that village. And so, the Dragon Demon Battalion separated itself, each part consisting of about a hundred soldiers, and were marching through the forest.

“In the back-story of a heroic tale, there are a lot of dirty stuff.”

As Vrusto was carrying his weapon, he bluntly said.

With a sidelong glance, looking at Riku, whose mood was sinking, he kept talking.

“This time we are lucky, you know? We got to get that village that is being invaded now the priority to them.”(Tl note: It is not stated why that specific village getting the priority being a good thing...) “But isn’t better to just evacuate everyone instead? In case they attack, then... just make it look like the village had been abandoned...”

“Stupid. If you do that, they will just look for another village to attack. To get the least amount of casualties, it is better for us, who are experienced in combat, to fight and give time for the villagers to run away. What? When the captain sees a good opportunity, he will immediately send the order to retreat. The thing those guys really want is only prestige. They only want to get a proper demon head to say that it was the one of a general to their people and want to show off with the reality that they destroyed a village, even if it just a shabby and negligible one.”

Riku looked downwards.

Looking down at her black shadow and keeping her heavy legs from stopping.

That what she had always believed was proved to be all lies... It was as if she was inside a bad dream.

Ever since she was driven away from the Barusak household,

maybe she was lost within a dream. While thinking that, she fixed the posture she was carrying her halberd.

“Humans are very much hated, right?”

“How many times have you already said that??”

With Vrusto’s howl, Riku’s feelings

Now she was going to fight a war, but even though it was the battlefield she so much yearned for, she didn’t feel excited about that.

It was all only a profound melancholy. Seeing Riku like that, he started scratching his cheek with his pointed nail.

“Brat, don’t die.”

“...Yes.”

“Ah, what is it. If you die, all the time I had to spend on you would be wasted. It would be a waste, right? And then, people would think it was because I didn’t instruct you well. If it affects my career, then what am I supposed to do? If possible, then you should even go get some achievements.”

“...Yes.”

“Get a grip on yourself!”

Vrusto firmly slapped Riku’s back.

Because of how much strength it was put on the slap, Riku was sent a bit forward, seeming to be almost falling down, but she was able to hold her feet. Because of that, she sent a protesting gaze to Vrusto.

“I, I know that! I don’t want to die yet... But... Is the source of the information even reliable? It could be a false alarm, right?”

“Apparently, it is reliable. I’ve heard it was an information a demon infiltrated in the capital got hold of after great pains. Well, I don’t really know the details.”

“Hey, Vrusto! Come here for a sec!”

Coming from the front, a demon that was shaking hands with Vrusto. It was a demon that these days was often having conversations with both seemingly being friendly to each other. Riku thought that one from before should be his friend.

And to confirm her thoughts, Vrusto was showing a broad smile.

“Brat, you keep marching there, alright? What is it, Seiji? Oh, Frank was there too.”

Leaving Riku alone, looking like he was having fun, he started to run and went more to the front.

Getting next to the demons he called Seiji and Frank, they started to talk, looking like very intimate friends. Riku wasn't able to hear what they were talking about.

Going with the flow of her surroundings, she kept the march.

Now that Vrusto was gone, there wasn't anyone she could talk to. If Leivein was nearby, maybe she could go next to him. But he was commanding another squad, so he wasn't around. And even if she were to go next to him, Leivein was still the captain of the Dragon Demon Division. There was no way a recently recruited soldier would be able to so casually do so.

“It would be nice if all that was only a dream.”

She knew she couldn't be all the time thinking back about the life she used to have. She understood she was thrown away by her father. But...

“Hey, are we going to kill that human brat?”

“Not really.”

“She smells like human anyway, so it can't be helped if I mistake her with the enemy.”

“Are you killing her during all the turmoil?”

“You should give up on that. Right now the captain isn’t here, but if he finds out later, he will get really mad.”

“What was the captain even thinking back then?”

With the cold glares together with all the talks she would here, the feeling she shouldn’t be living there only became even clearer.

The doubt she had of whether it was fine if she kept living together with the demons only increased.

She running away as a deserter during the turmoil of the war could be a possibility.

But, before she would even consider running away, at the moment, there was not even a way for her to be assured she would have food to keep living on. Riku gave a very deep sigh.

“Fire the exorcising arrows!!”

From the trees left and right, an arrow shower rained down.

Names:

セージ: Seiji

フランク: Frank

魔族掃討戦: Demon cleaning campaign

Chapter 7

The Assault

The arrows were approaching.

And it wasn't only one or two arrows.

Suddenly, an amount of arrows so great that becomes impossible to count poured down like rain.

The demons that were before marching, for the ones that carried one, each lifted their own shields. Fortunately, although there were still a great number of arrows, they were thinner than twigs. If it was those thin arrows, there would be no way they could go through the iron shields. The metallic sounds kept resounding indefinitely. But for the demons that were one second late to ready their shields, the arrow shower was like hell. Without being able to defend themselves, they would have the arrows piercing their throats and their arms.*1

Riku, who wasn't carrying a shield, could only repel the incoming arrows with her halberd as much as she could. But even then, there was no way she could repel all of the arrows. One arrow grazed on Riku's cheek. She felt the same pain as the one for cutting your finger with paper. With the back of her hand, she wiped her cheek.

"Stupid demons! For them to get fooled by false information!"

From up on a tree, a laughing voice was possible to hear.

Looking upwards to the voice, on a tree branch, there was a shadow covered with a black mantle. Together with him, there were roughly about a bit more than a hundred people. Holding his mantle together, there was a brooch with the image that looked like one of a snake inscribed on it.*2 Right as she saw

the pattern, she sighed.

“It’s the family crest of the spiritualist family Bernaal.”

Just like the Barusak household, it was one of the spiritualist families that served the king.

As a fellow spiritualist family, they would together participate in this ritualistic war.*3 She had heard some times that they were one of the spiritualist families that would just for the sake of prolonging the peace of the kingdom, fight the demons. At least, as far as her father had taught her, they weren’t a family that would do something coward like a night surprise attack.

Disregarding Riku, who was dumbfounded and tightly grasping her halberd, the situation still progressed.

“Shit! It was a trap?!”

“To think they concealed their smells and got close to us... Damn it. Everyone, attack!”

The demons wouldn’t only stand, keep being shot by the arrows.

The demons that had good physical constitution, all at once, were charging and striking against the trees.

As a demon enveloped by a carapace and another that looked like a bear stroke against the trees, the ground shook. Some spiritualist that had lost their balance fell down to the ground. But actually, there were also some spiritualists that went down the trees themselves before being thrown out of their balance. Each wielding a spiritualist blade, swinging it down towards the demons closer to the trees. The demons that were bellow the trees, just like a cutting a fruit, were cut into two halves.*4

“Tch, everyone charge!! Even if it is with your last efforts, kill them!”

“That’s my line. For the sake of the kingdom, kill all the

demons!!”*5

The demon banning arts she so much had trained and the combat techniques of the demons she have been training as well; now both were confronting each other.

But the situation of the battle now was that the spiritualist side were having an overwhelming advantage. In terms of numbers, they were even. But the spiritualists were specialists in exterminating demons.*6 No matter how much the demons would temper their own bodies, they were like babies when facing the swords infused with demon banning power. After all, even the one with a carapace as hard as armor was easily cut. For each spiritualist killed, five or six demons would lose their heads.

“Shit. Fight until your last breath!! ”

The demon that was commanding the army had his voice interrupted.

A spiritualist that was carrying a spear thrust it through his back. Without any ceremonies, he easily died just like that. Even though the demon’s numbers were a considerable power enough to be called an small army, in front of the spiritualists, they were like powerless peons.

“Die! You demons don’t deserve to live anywhere in this world.”

The spiritualist, with a loud voice, declared.

Yes, in all those hundred or years... The reason why demons weren’t even considered to be an enemy to humans was that.

And this time too, even before starting to fight, the winner had already been decided.

...Or so was supposed to be the case.

“Too fast. Demons die so easily...”

Out-of-place for a war, Riku's voice resounded through the battlefield.

And as if following the intent of those words, screams from spiritualists started echoing around.*7

From how sudden the screams were, many spiritualists stopped moving. The demons that before were fighting a one-way defensive war, surprised, stopped their hands too. And then, by the time the spiritualists stopped moving, their good-fortune ended there.

“You guys too, shouldn't you just go die already?”

Riku swung her halberd.

The sharply polished lump of iron as if it was very much unexpected flew towards a spiritualist. Cutting his torso and sending it flying, the body fell while exposing his internal organs. But before it fell to the ground, another spiritualist that was still looking at his friend that suddenly died just now had his head cut off. The fresh blood was spraying to the surroundings. Some of this blood stuck to the face of one of the spiritualist, who seemed to be their captain. That spiritualist slowly moved his hand to touch his cheek. In his finger, there was now blood sticking to it. Only then he came to himself. It was an expression of surprise at first, but soon he started to twist his face. The emotion there was of anger. The spiritualist, with his eyes bloodshot, looked at the blood soaked Riku.

“You damned demon lass.”

As he raised his voice, he readied his sword stance.

Riku, with a expressionless face, was rotating her halberd. With very cold eyes, she looked at the spiritualist. Then, slowly she walked toward that sword wielding spiritualist. From her behavior, it looked as if she wasn't even ready for fighting. She was only lazily rotating her halberd with her right hand. Looking at how Riku was acting, veins in his head popped out

because of anger.^{8*}

“You will only be able to act arrogant for now. I will kill you with my own hands!”

The spiritualist vigorously raised his sword overhead.

Riku, raised her face to follow the sword, as if doing so was a pain in the ass. Even now that the overpowering demon banning sword was swung down, it didn't seem like she was thinking about evading the attack. Instead, as if to catch the sword that was being swung down, Riku put her hand forward. The sword, together with the sound of the wind being cut, fell down towards Riku's hand. The impact of the sword being swung down made Riku frown a bit.

But that was all. It was supposed to be a strong attack, but Riku was left unharmed. Until now, it was the same sword that were easily cutting down demons, but in Riku's palm, there weren't any wounds.

The spiritualist expression turned from anger to surprise. While shouting, he put his demon banning power into his sword. But even so, Riku was left unfazed. No matter how much power he would put into the sword, Riku wouldn't bleed.

“Wh-why!?”

“While there is demon banning power into it, in its normal state, it is nothing more than a simple and blunt harmless sword.”

The spiritualist was shocked.

Rather than anger, the surprise and fear of the unknown dominated. Through all of his body, he was sweating. He was now fearful of the little Riku more than anything else.⁹

On the other way, Riku was showing an expression that was the opposite of the spiritualist's. She was showing one vaguely tranquil and a lonely smile. But, in her eyes resided madness.

Looking up at the surprised spiritualist, Riku indifferently spoke to him.

“Even if you can cut demons, you can’t cut me.”*10

Holding his sword with her left hand and tightly holding her halberd with her right hand, still with a calm expression...

“Goodbye, spiritualist of Bernaal.”

And the spiritualist, unable to put resistance, was vertically cut in half.*11

A deep red color similar to her hair painted Riku’s skin. Without showing any signs that she cared about that, she turned her eyes to the remaining spiritualists.

“Good afternoon, Bernaal spiritualists. Have you prepared yourselves to hand over your heads?”

While holding her blood covered halberd in her hand, she walked over the now cut into two spiritualist.

It was like Othello. The board which the white pieces were in predominance, with only a single black piece, the the situation was reversed.

As the red halberd danced, heads with its faces twisted in fear would fly around. To the spiritualists, it would be like the image of hell itself. Even so, there were spiritualists that were still somewhat right in mind. One spiritualist, while trembling so much his demon banning sword was shaking, shouted with all his strength.

“It-It’s only one person! If we can kill that, it will be our win!!”

“If you can kill that? That may be a little wrong.”

The spiritualist trembling arm was cut off and fell to the ground. As he saw his arm there on the ground, any remaining sanity was blown away. Raising a scream that wouldn’t become words, he took one step back. Because of how in panic he was

as he did so, he ended up falling down backside. Even so, he did his all to run away. He retreated as he was being dyed in red by the blood on the ground.

But right as that spiritualist was about to pull back, a sharp spear pierced through his chest.

“Sorry, but I can’t just let that brat just go and reap all the achievements, can I?”

It was Vrusto’s spear that had pierced through the spiritualist.

As if that was a signal, all the demons that were still alive went to attack the remaining spiritualists. Among them, there were not even one person still willing to fight. To Riku’s eyes, the spiritualists that had lost their fighting spirit weren’t a threat to the demons that had seen a chance of winning.

“It’s not enough.”*12

Riku was looking at the surroundings from afar, seeing the demons swarming the spiritualists.

Without averting her eyes from the tragedy that was happening to them and without even blinking; only holding her halberd in her arms as she was looking at it.

“Alright, quickly someone tell captain Leivein about the trap!”

“Reorganize the rankings, we are pulling back!!”

As the last spiritualist stopped moving, the remaining demon were taking the commands given.

Within the sea of blood, everyone happy about their victory and talking to one another about each of their struggles. Among those, one demon left from the group of demons that were talking. As if he remembered something, that demon approached Riku. It was not possible to see through the expression that was on the face of the demon...Of Vrusto.

From his hairy wolf face, looked like it was angry, but at the

same time, it looked as if he was laughing. Since there was nothing to say about that, Riku saluted to him while still grasping her halberd.

Silently, Vrusto looked at Riku for a moment. And then lifting up his hand with sharp nails...

“You did well!”

And with all his strength, he slapped her back.

Because of the strength put into it, she staggered. Because of such sudden attack, Riku was about to voice her complaints, but before she could open her mouth, Vrusto started talking.

“You, I thought since you were only a little brat you would die in your first battle. This is evidence that my training methods are very good.”

Because of such a weird reason, Vrusto’s tone of voice seemed very happy.

Whether because of how he was bragging about his skills as an instructor or something else.

Riku didn’t understand very well, but thinking about that was troublesome now. She wasn’t really interested in the reason why Vrusto was happy. While rubbing her pained back, she looked at Vrusto.

“But, you are really covered in blood, huh. When we come back, you need to properly wash the blood that is covering your armor. You are still a girl after all, one way or another.”^{13*}

Only saying that, Vrusto turned away from Riku.

He went back to the group of surviving demons. In the end, she didn’t really know what all that was about as a question mark floated above her head. For now, she thought she should be wiping the blood that was covering her halberd with her

handkerchief. With that, she took out the handkerchief that was in her pocket. But even the handkerchief that was supposed to be white was covered in blood.

“Hey, brat. By the way, I have something I want to ask.”

As she was wiping her halberd with the blood covered handkerchief, Vrusto turned back to her.

“You were supposed to be of one of those spiritualist families, right? Is it really alright for you to have killed them just like that with no hesitation?”

“Was there a problem in doing so?”

Riku tilted her little head.

Each time she moved the handkerchief, the blood stains would stretch onto the silvery blade. She was able to remove the fragments of organs and most of the blood. But if she were to wipe more than that, it would make the halberd even dirtier rather than cleaning it. As she was folding her handkerchief, she said.

“That was the enemy, right? If they are that, then they are people that need to be killed, right?”

“But a few weeks before, they were you allies, weren’t they?”

“Allies?”

To Vrusto’s question, Riku raised the corners of her mouth.

With her red hair fluttering with the wind, her lips dyed in blood formed a smile.

“Those people wouldn’t accept me. That’s why they weren’t my allies. Besides...”

Deep in Riku’s eyelids, radiant blue eyes were reflected onto them.

For the first time since she had been born somebody

expected something out of her.

Leivein had accepted Riku's power. And to her, that didn't have anywhere to go, he gave her a place to belong to.

...Even the red hair she didn't like that much he told her that it looked nice on her.

The one to first accept her existence was Leivein. The one to first consider her necessary was him too. That's why she would swing her halberd for his sake.

For the sake of the Dragon Demon Battalion he gave to her...

"It's because here is the place I belong to."

1. 防ぐことが出来ず、矢で喉を貫かれたり、腕を吹き飛ばされたりしているWut?
Such dangerous arrows... For them to be able to do that: 腕を吹き飛ばされたりしている
Anyway... How the heck am I supposed to translate that, supposing the arm was slightly moved by the impact rather than being blown up somehow...
2. マントの留め具には、蛇をかたどったような文様が刻まれている。その文様を見た瞬間、リクは息をのんだ。This->留め具<- Thingy here... I got no idea how to translate it in a way that people could properly understand... Because the words in english that supposedly it would be translated too are ones that are kindaaa... Seemingly unfitting, aye. Well, I dunno, but at least it isn't a brooch, although it probably would have a shape similar to one.
3. 同列の退魔一族として、儀式とかは共同してやるらしいI can only guess that when it says儀式it is talking about the war.
4. 木の下にいた魔族たちは、甲羅を果実のように斬られたり、真っ二つになってしまった。In there it says something about甲羅, which apparently can mean either carapace or a person's back... And like, it was cut like a fruit into two halves... But like,

there is a small possibility that it was talking about the carapace demon from before... Something like, among the demons that were bellow the trees, the carapace one got cut into two halves like a fruit or something? Probably not, but not impossible... Well, either way, it felt kind of weird to translate, so there is that too for me to put it here.

5. Apparently, the translation ofこちらの台詞 is “that’s my line”, which to me, is kind of... Dunno, misleading? At least for people that don’t have english as the main language, so just in case I will put it here: That’s my line = You took the words from my mouth/You said just what I was about to say, etc, etc, *etc.*
6. しかし、退魔師には魔族殲滅に特化した剣があったI’m not sure whether it is saying that they had swords that were made to kill demons or that themselves were trained into being specialized in killing demons... In japanese, when I see that, I just can’t help but think it is talking about the sword like they had trained in swordplay etc, and now wielding it with skill ´n´ stuff, and that being represented by the word sword. Well, they are specialists in killing demons anyway, so who cares? ^^ (A lot of people surprisingly...)
7. I used the word echoed because I couldn’t think of anything that fitted better as the translation... Well, accurate enough in the meaning at least. Maybe I could have used resounded, but since I used it before, I decided against it... Well, it seems kinda weird to use echo, so I am just putting this note because why not... Such unnecessary note -.- oh well
8. そんなリクを見て、退魔師の額に筋が立った。It says about that the thingy when people get angry at manga and stuff. That thingy in the head that is like a X of when people get angry. Regardless, he got angry. End of the story.

9. I don't understand very well this: 自分よりはるかに小さなリクを恐れているHe fears Riku more than himself? Wut... This kind of stuff is the type that even by looking at japanese dictionaries and stuff I won't find anything about it.
10. It says人間withわたしwritten above it.
11. It says that he was cut just like a vertical number one kanji letter. 無抵抗の退魔師を上から縦一文字に切り裂いた。Adding too much unnecessary details is kinda...Specially in english... And since it is talking about japanese reference stuff that many people won't get(well, many people that will be reading this would probably know the kanji for number one, but even so...)so I decided to not add it in, since it would seem too weird.
12. Here it saysあつけないwhich I can only guess that it is talking about how the war was ending too fast, and that it wasn't enough... Putting it ended all too fast just like that would dispel the feeling of calmness Riku was supposed to have at that time.
13. I don't understand what she being a girl has to do with properly washing the blood from her armor... Just wrote what was written -.-... I guess it is something that has to do with properly keeping appearances, although in my opinion, regardless, you wouldn't really want to have your armor, or anything else stinking with blood, and so properly wash it. Unless the person liked the smell, I guess?

Names:

ベルナル: Bernaal

Chapter 8

The Reunion at Full Moon

Demon capital Taitas.

In this hidden village of which it was the best among them, many demons crowded. For the demon race, it could be said that it was considered a place similar to a capital. If one were to ignore the fact that it was covered by a thick white colored mist all the time, it could be said to be a nice place to live.*1

But, to the living demons, the mist wasn't something that exactly limited their senses, nor was really a hindrance. Even if the line of sight became limited, this mist had been always protecting the demon race for two hundred years. The mist was like a good neighbor that the demons had always relied on; a very important existence that protected them.

At this night, the rare occurrence of the mist clearing up happened.

Up in the indigo sky full of twinkling stars was a golden colored full moon. While the streets were filled with demons dressed up for the moon viewing party, inside the demon lord castle, which soared high at the center of the demon capital Taitas, there weren't even a single demon excited for it. Rather, without caring about how the night was such that the moon was shining so brightly, there wasn't anyone looking outside.

The reason for that was simple.

It was because an important reunion that involved the fate of the Demon Lord Army was about to happen.

Within the reunion that was happening at the demon lord castle, there were an array of very famous demons.

Demons that had magnificent wings, demons that were sharpening its claws, demons that had horns to be proud of, all demons were looking at a person kneeling at the center of the room. The one kneeling there was Leivein, dressed in his uniform. He still wasn't an adult, but he had already been distinguishing himself from others, even more than his father. Because he was known to be the "within ten years guaranteed to enter the top brass demon youth" that this incident gathered interest from many demons.

"Leivein Adlar! What in the world were you thinking for you to recruit a human into the Demon Lord army!?"^{2*}

The one to start the debate was a very muscular horned demon.

While touching his mustache that couldn't be more well embellished than that, he kept staring at Leivein, who still wasn't in position to say anything. Although Leivein had been asked a question, he remained silent. Moreover, he didn't even look at the demon that asked the question. He only kept looking down at the polished marble of the floor while remaining on one knee.^{*3}

"Youngsters aren't supposed to do whatever wishes you have. Immediately go kill the human. Otherwise, you will be banished from the Demon Lord army.

"Besides, isn't the human in question of one of those hateful spiritualist families?"

The demon had barely finished what he had to say, but the other demons that had their arms crossed started questioning him too.

It was possible to notice their anger by looking into their eyes, which burned fires of anger, although it contrary to that their faces, which seemed very calm at a first glance. If that was the battlefield, the amount of bloodlust was so much that it felt

they would immediately attack with their prided fangs, biting Leivein to death.

The mustache demon seemed happy for getting agreed to. Looking so very much happy for a reason like that, he patted the shoulder of another demon.

“Oh, lieutenant general Zerrik, are your thoughts the same as mine?”

“Indeed. It is as lieutenant general Gortoberuk says. Even if something like a human is added to our forces, it will only be a nuisance.”

Zerrik provokingly muttered.

Edgar Zerrik’s parents, and even his grandfather and his son, all were killed mercilessly by spiritualists. And for his son’s case, not only was he captured, he was dragged around until they got to a city. And then, his head that was decapitated just for a little while later to get thrown away in the river. That is why it couldn’t be helped that he hated humans more than it was necessary to. About that, everyone gathered here knew it.

“Say something, lieutenant commander Adlar!!”

“Very well, lieutenant general Gortoberuk. Then, I would like to ask something to lieutenant general Zerrik.”

As he was looking at the floor, Leivein calmly said.

At one glance, it was impossible to read anything from his expression. But there was one person there that knew him too well... It was the one behind Gortoberuk and Zerrik; Leivein’s father, who was now feeling ashamed of Leivein’s actions. He knew that Leivein was in fact starting to get angry.

“This last battle, who was the one that had the most achievements?”

“Indeed, it was the human.”

Zerrik was making a face that seemed like he would jump at Leivein at any moment.

In the last battle, a surprise attack from the spiritualist side was unexpected.

Regarding the information that was secretly obtained, until a group of spiritualists could get to the targeted village, it was estimated that it would take at least a few days. And considering that, in order for the emergency evacuation to happen smoothly, Leivein's army was dispatched.

But in fact, the village in question being attacked was actually a false information, and the spiritualists were planning to completely eliminate the demon forces that were hurrying to the village.

From the words of a captured spiritualist, their objective was using the battle as a real-life experiment to verify the effectiveness of the special mantle that concealed human smell.

And by the developed mantle shown effectiveness, it was proved that its usage for surprise attacks was a success.

If the newly recruited human... Riku Barusak wasn't there, the forward squad would be decimated, and the other squads behind would keep marching without knowing anything, thus decimated as well. The whole Dragon Demon Battalion would be annihilated.

"Wasn't it confirmed on the information that within the Bernal family, that mantle had lost credibility?"*4

"Yes, but!"

"And more than making them lose credibility on the mantle, didn't their morale also fall down to the ground?"

"B-but! Have you not considered that this human that was thrown away by the Barusak family might have hidden intentions?"

Next to him, Gortoberuk nodded. While stroking his prided mustache, agreeing to Zerrik's statements, he started speaking.

"She could have purposely cut some of her spiritualist fellows, and licking our boots so that she could show herself as somebody useful. She wouldn't only get data from our newest weapons, but also would even gain our trust. It would be this much advantageous of a strategy to the spiritualists."

"Hidden intentions? Licking our boots?"

At that time, for the first time Leivein lost his composure enough so that people could know his feelings by his expression.

He was still looking at the floor, but as if sneering at his superiors, who were many times older than him, the corners of his mouth rose into a smile.

"Your point has value, but let me only say one thing. That thing will definitely not betray us."

"Leivein Adlar! On what basis are you saying such a thing!? Certainly something like trusting with nothing to support it or so is simply foolish and should be left out of arguments, should it not?"

"If you want me to prove my point, then I can do so."

His smile was unchanged.

The smile he was showing was one fearless and arrogant.

Perhaps, if Leivein had a bigger stature, and if he was permitted to lift his head, then he would end up looking down on them. Gortoberuk, noticing such smile, got angry. As if trying to get closer to him, he did one step forward.

"Then, tell us right now! It is an order from your superior!"

"What, this is an incredibly easy thing to do. I merely got hold of the name of that thing. The moment it tries to betray us,

binding its soul would be a simple thing to do.”

As if Gortoberuk had his breathing cut off, he twisted his bearded face.

The concept of the worth of having one’s true name was also widely known by the demons. Whether it was a human or a demon, the moment you are born in this world, you are given a [name]. If you have knowledge of this name, you can manipulate the person whose name you got. Of course, even outside that person’s will, you can command the person to suicide.

“Lieutenant general, don’t worry. If in one out of thousand of a chance that such a thing happens, I can easily make it suicide. You should know how the strength of having someone’s true name is absolute, correct?”

“G-gh.”(ぐ、ぐぬゝ)

Gortoberuk knew the terror of the power of the concept of one’s true name too well.

Even if you have something to say against, you become unable to say anything. No matter how much you would try to think about a way to resist, you would just become unable to even think. As if to say “such useless guy”, Zerrik gave Gortoberuk, who became unable to say anything, a glance. And then, in place of Gortoberuk, he spoke.

“You say that, lieutenant commander, but you still could say that it is to consider the possibility of the name you got being false.”

“That’s impossible. Losing its pride as a spiritualist and reduced to be starving to death; some little girl rotting in some back-alley waiting for death that wasn’t even aware of how society works. There was no way it would tell lies.”

As if clarifying any doubts by cutting it in two, Leivein

declared.

As long as it had something to eat, whether it was human or demon, both could keep living. But even with nothing to eat, as long as one had pride and faith, one could keep on fighting. But if those two were also broke, then one wouldn't be able to do anything. Unless one could find hope once again, death was the only road.

Zerrik knew this much.

But it was still possible that the human was still hiding its pride as a spiritualist. Immediately following that, as to point this out, he was about to open his mouth.

“Lieutenant commander Leivein Adlar.”

A clear and noticeably young voice resounded through the audience.

Everyone simultaneously looked at the owner of the voice. Leivein too, thus finally lifting up his head.

The owner of the voice was a young girl. She was wearing simple toned black clothes and had a blonde hair of similar color to the rice plant at autumn, having it tied into a twin-tails. Somewhat above her ears, there were two magnificent horns. This very young girl that was cute in every point was seated in the enshrined throne with her legs crossed; a throne that was located in a place higher than where the people discussing at the reunion where at.

The name of the girl was Charlotte. In the outward appearance, she seemed to be a young girl, but in fact she was the younger sister of the demon lord, who was sealed away two hundred years ago, and now was commanding the demon race. In other words...

“Ha, Charlotte-sama”*5(はっ)

He hid away his arrogant face and changed it back to his

usual face. But this time it was different from the unreadable face from not long ago. It was a very serious and honest face that made his loyalty to the Demon Lord army known.

To such Leivein, Charlotte only silently looked at him.

“The words I want to say... You actually already know it, right?”

“...Would it be regarding the sealing of Demon Lord-sama?”

“If you know this much, you should already know well enough what to do. As it happens, after ten years, we will be prepared to dispel the seal; it will be a very important moment. Will that Barusak descendant you picked up be useful at that time?”

In a mood of high tension comparable to having your whole body pricked by needles, the audience got nervous.

It was an ambiance that not only made Gortoberuk or Zerrik, but also was like that to the point of making the common soldiers that were only listening very tense. It had already become a situation that no intrusions would be permitted.

“Then, what is it that you are going to do... Leivein Adlar?”

“There will be no problems regarding that.”*6

In that mood that seemed something could explode at any moment, Leivein nonchalantly answered the question together with a smile.

“Not only it acts like pet dog, I’ve also been rigorously disciplining it. If even then she still bites, there will be no need for worries as I will just dispose of her like a street dog.”*7

From the window, a pale light from the full moon was flowing in.

Charlotte then nodded at Leivein’s words, which were all spoken with no hesitations.

“If that is the case, then I will leave it to you to take care of the dog. In these ten years, train her well.”

With those few words, Riku Barusak’s fate was decided.

To keep raising her. If she acts wrong, then punishment. This was the decision Charlotte took, and nobody was allowed to go against it. The actual situation which the Demon Lord wasn’t present, Charlotte’s decisions were like the decisions of the Demon Lord army itself.

Gortoberuk and Zerrik, and the many other demons too all lowered their heads as to show respect.

“”As you command!”” *8

This was what happened in this rare night which the moonlight passed through the mist.*9

Looking forward to unseal the Demon Lord after these ten years, the demon lord army bit by bit started to act.

For the spiritualist side that was already aware about it, it was only something negligible.

-
1. It says deep milk colored... Why not just white? I put white, don’t care why.
 2. Bloody unreliable dictionaries... Maybe it can’t be helped in this case, but who cares 少佐<-I have no idea what exactly this is... Apparently it is either major or lieutenant commander... But his soldiers called him captain before so I have no idea... It feels like it is something unique to the language, but if that’s the case, then the dictionary should be properly explaining it. Or maybe it is just that I dunno shit about military stuff... At least, until know, in field, their titles seemed to change depending on the situation. Once I get to understand what all this is about, I will change everything there.

3. これ以上ないというくらい手入れされた髭を撫でながら、無言を貫くレーヴェンを睨みつけるThis->無言を貫く<- Is like when a person is in a difficult moment and can't say anything, otherwise, things would only get worse. Something like when a boss is unreasonably angry at you or something and you feel like you should rather remain silent for the moment. It would be the case for this scene, but in english I couldn't really find a way to properly explain the situation. So, this note would be for those that didn't understand well.
4. アレは、ベルナールの中でも有望株を討ち取ったという報告は確認なさいましたか? Not sure if it is correct because of that ->有望株<- But it should be something similar...
5. 、シャルロット様This ->はっ<- is something I don't know how to write in english. Geez, I hate onomatopoeias... Either way, this would be pretty much like saluting.
6. Note that doesn't really count because I was too lazy to remove it and renumber everything. I'm already wasting my time by writing all this you say?(or just think) Well, but renumbering everything is more stressful, you see...
7. It's literally that... Well, there is still the possibility of him treating her as a street dog because of multiple meanings, but it felt that disposing was more probable.
8. Duck! DUUUUCK!! As to not say fuck... I am a sitting duck. Wasn't funny? Dunt care... Rather than that... What am I supposed to put in here: 仰せのままに、魔王代行様It says substitute for the demon lord-sama. Like wuuuuuut?? I would go arrested if I put such a thing in the translation... I don't know what to do, please help me ;-; I will write cute emotes, so I beg for guidance. :3 :p ;o -.- D:
9. それは、珍しく霧が出ていない満月の夜のことだった。Japanese logic for phrase constructing... I guess it is right the way I translated... But I can only guess...

Names:

エドガー・ゼーリック: Edgar Zerrik

シャルロツテ: Charlotte

レーヴェン・アドラー: Leivein Adlar

ゴルトベルク: Gortoberuk

魔都タイタス: Demon capital Taitas

Note:

Well, seeing that there probably will be some onomatopoeias (GOOGLE IT IF YOU DON'T KNOW JUST DO IT DON'T GIVE UP) that will be troublesome to translate, for the sake of not writing some random nonsense that is supposed to be sounds and stuff, everytime there is one that simply has no hope of being properly translated, I will put the japanese one next to it with the ().

Chapter 9

Ten Years Later...

Ten years had passed.

The port city Perikka as always was stinking of alcohol.

The foreign merchants would spend their money they got hold of by doing wicked things, and the pirates would throw out a feast for themselves using the gold and silver treasures they had stolen. And all those kind of vulgar guys would dive themselves into the pleasure quarters looking to please themselves.

Sometimes, a demon merchant would come asking for a place to sell goods in exchange for money, but the merchant's association of Perikka would only turn a deaf ear to such requests.

There was no forgiveness for demons, that were lower than domestic animals, or poor people.

As long as you had the money, it was a city of elegance that was always wrapped in a mood of cheerfulness.

Today too there was another wealthy merchant getting himself drunk.

Finishing his meal at a first-class restaurant, he got on his personal carriage and went his way home.

This carriage was pulled by two elegant horses of fine quality and with a wide and comfortable space inside. After the wealthy merchant and his butler, and also his escort got in, they departed. Happy, the merchant showed a complacent smile.

“Fufufufu, because of the stupid nobles that didn’t know the market price, I got big profit. To think that a pot costing a hundred silver coins was sold for a thousand. Such a large profit.”

“Indeed, it is as you say, master.”

With a faint smile, the butler proudly poured the drink in his master’s golden wine cup.

The purely made of gold cup was a product of good quality he had received as payment from pirates he had connections to. If he were to sell this, he would get enough gold coins to build a small castle. In reality, it was a piece he wouldn’t be able to get by only working as a merchant.

“Good grief. It was good that stupid elder brother turned down the family heritage.”

The merchant faintly smiled.

His elder brother had talent for sword fighting. And so, for the sake of his dream to come true or something like that, he departed towards the royal capital. And since then, never came back home. Deep in his heart, he thanked god for his elder brother to be this stupid.

If his brother were to receive the heritage, without doubt he wouldn’t be able to live in this much extravagance. He only wished that once his elder brother came back screwed up, he wouldn’t tell him to hand over the heritage.

“Truly, tonight is a good night.”

The merchant moved his cup back and forth.

The wine inside the cup was elegantly shaking according to his movement. It was a wine of many times more worth than the one he drank at the restaurant he had eaten. In the Perikka city, the merchants that could actually drink something like that were only very few people.

With all that, this merchant was taken by a happiness that had no comparison.

But...

“Hm?”

The carriage stopped.

It still wasn't supposed to be time for him to arrive to his residence. He wondered if it was an drunk pirate or some vagabond that was sleeping in the middle of the road. For something like that, just avoiding and keep going would be enough, but there were no signs of the carriage starting to move again.

“Go see the situation.”

Even though the merchant was in a good mood before, it was completely dampened. While gulping down drink from the cup, he annoyingly commanded the butler. There was nothing his butler couldn't deal with. And in the minimal chance of something wrong happening, he had a veteran soldier that went through war as his escorts, and then as usual, he could just settle everything with force.

Right now, the escort prepared himself so he would be able to draw his sword at any moment.

Answering to his master, the butler responded.

“Understood.”

Bowing his head, he rapidly got down from the carriage... And then, his head was cut off.

“Huh?”

Because of the sudden event, he got his mouth wide-opened.

The escort guarding the merchant, because of the surprise, in an instant readied himself.

Without noticing it, the merchant dropped his golden cup; that one which could buy one castle by itself.

The butler's head, as it was spraying blood around, was rolling in the ground. The merchant could only keep blankly staring at the head.

“Ara, is there someone left?”

The girl's voice entered into the merchant's ear at that instant. And in that instant, he came back to himself.

“Hi,hiii!”(ひ、ひいい !)

The merchant went for the other carriage door, leaving the carriage almost fell down by himself.

He didn't know what happened, but now his butler was dead. In front of his eyes, his head was cut off.

The merchant, now sobered up completely, once he stumbled out of the carriage, he lost his breath. On the ground around, it was a sea of blood. The horses that were pulling the carriage and the coachman were now sinking in the sea of blood. Sinking with their head and torso separated.

“W-what is that? What the hell is that!!?”

“What it is, you say. Isn't it obvious they are only dead bodies?”

Once again, the high-pitched voice sounded through the road.

As to protect the merchant, the escort went in front of him.

Hiding behind the shadows of the escort, he secretly tried to confirm the owner of the voice. And then his muscles froze.

It was a young girl walking through the sea of blood, splashing it with each step.

The girl was completely painted in red. Red hair that seemed

to burn, a red armor that was shaped perfectly to her slim body and a face covered in blood. The girl's eyes were black like a swamp with no bottom.

At the moment the blood covered halberd dimly shone, the merchant shouted.

“Q-quickly kill that thing!! If you do, I double you wage!!”

As if agreeing to those words, the escort drew his sword.

But the merchant didn't notice. He didn't notice that his proficient escorts which would fear nothing were dripping with sweat from their forehead.*1

He didn't notice how the sword that was always held in only one hand, was now being held with two hands.

And because he didn't notice such thing, just like usual, or rather, more than usual, he raised his voice to send an order.

“You are supposed to be a veteran of a hundred battles, right!? Kill that thing that looks like a little girl already!! Cut her head off and tear her into pieces!!”

The escort vigorously kicked the ground and rushed forward.

Aiming at the girl that had only about half his stature, he swung his prided swords down.

And so the fragile girl would be soon enough split in half.

...But what was expected to happen didn't.

Using the hook of the halberd, the girl took the sword away from his hands.

In contrast to the escort's shocked face and full of sweat, her face was as calm as it could be. Even though the escort had put his body weight in his blow, the halberd was left unfazed, not even quivering the slightest.

And looking bored, the girl sighed.

“Yes, end of the battle.”

And then, the girl declared his execution.

The massive halberd was with only one hand easily maneuvered.

The escort didn't even have time to run away. Stumbling by the force of having his sword taken, the escort was now only a worthless existence. Like cutting a fruit, the halberd perfectly cut the escort in two halves.

“Su-such a thing, impossible...”

Seeing his escort sinking down in the sea of blood, the merchant stepped back.

The escort was supposed to have about two times more physical strength. If it was about age, he should have been about twice as much old as her. This soldier that had a long military service; such soldier was easily killed.*2

The merchant looked around his surroundings.

But around that alley, there was nobody.

No, even if there was anyone, the person wouldn't have enough power to oppose the girl. The only way for a miracle to happen would be to somehow get to the main street ahead of here and ask for help.

But while looking at him the girl was closing in to the merchant.

No matter how, there was any openings for him to run away. Lightly rotating her halberd, she slowly approached the merchant.

“Next will be your turn... Hm? Your face... I have the feeling I have seen your face before. When was it?”

While being troubled by it, the girl was looking up at the sky.

A miracle had happened for the merchant.

The moment she left her eyes from him, he started running.

That girl was insane.

She was definitely insane, or so the merchant decided. He needed to quickly run away to somewhere. And then ask for help.

Besides, the girl's weapon was a halberd. That heavy looking axe shaped blade stuck to a spear, for a skinny girl like her, it was definitely something impossible to be waving around. Only to raise it overhead it would take time. Even if she was to follow him, he should be able to escape.

In that city, for that skinny looking girl, there were a mountain of bold pirates to deal with her.

"Well, never mind."

It seemed that the girl didn't recognize the merchant.

Cutting through the wind, she swung her halberd.

The merchant's head flew and it fell into the sea of blood. And just like that she had raised the death count by one. The girl grabbed the merchant's head by his short hair.

"For now, let's take it home. It's only to be sure after all."

The girl, covered in blood, was happily smiling.

Carrying the merchant's head just like that, she pompously left the alley. Getting to the main street, even though the girl was covered in blood, nobody paid any heed to that. Nobody started screaming or so. The street that was so beautiful it was only next to the one in the capital until a few hours ago was now sinking in a sea of blood. And there were no humans screaming anywhere.

The demons that the girl had brought with her were now stabbing any human that showed even little signs of breathing.

Among these demons, one turned his attention to the girl. While holding a human he had pierced through with his spear, he rudely spoke.

“Hey, brat! Don’t just be standing around and finish your mission already.”

“I know warrant officer Vrusto. By the way, was this guy in the list?”

The girl showed him the merchant’s head.

After giving one glance to the head, he threw the human away. With a splash, the human landed onto a pond of blood.

“Ah, that guy is in the list. It was someone on the lowest seat of the merchant union, and also is a blood relative of one of the capital’s generals.”

“I see...Thank you. Since it is on the list, then I need to take good care of it.”

The girl put the head inside a sack full of heads.

Inside the blood soaked sack, there were a great number of heads. The head of a hundred battles veteran pirate, and the face of a noble from a powerful family that had committed wicked acts over any limits too. And all of the heads had their eyes widely opened in fear. Looking inside the sack, Vrusto whistled at what he saw.*3

“So scary. Aren’t they of ojou-chan’s same race?”

“Same race?”

The girl leaned her head to the side.

“It feels like I’ve said this many times, but... While we are from the same species, those are enemies. Captain Leivain had said before. The merchant union refused our negotiations and killed fifteen of our messengers. We gave our final warning, telling them what would happen if they refused, but they

ignored it. That's why we must destroy the city and eliminate any opposition."

"You are so scary, you that made all this become reality, ojouchan. Well, I guess it's Perikka's merchant union's fault for ignoring the last warning. Even though it wouldn't end up with everything reeking of blood if they didn't... By the way, use honorifics. One way or another, I'm ojouchan's instructor, right?"

"Right now we are still , so it doesn't matter. Besides, I'm higher ranked than you, you know?"

"Yes, yes, I will be sure to take care... Ah, the chit-chat was supposed to have ended already. Don't low your guard and end up dying, second lieutenant Riku."

Vrusto lightly patted the girl's shoulder.

And now, once again readying his spear, he ran after a place that humans seemed to be hiding.

In the blood soaked street, only the girl was remaining. While fixing the position of halberd that she was leaning on her shoulder, she closed her eyes.

"Even though I used to be from a spiritualist family, to think I would be commanding demon troops."

She started to listen attentively to the sounds of the surroundings.

And she didn't hear any human voice.

The only sound she had heard was the sound of the demons destroying the human city.

-
1. 豪商は、気が付かない。顔色一つ変えたことのない護衛兵が、額から汗を流していることに。Well, to add up to the translation since I couldn't put everything in it because of how the phrase was

organized and how a expression was used. It would be that->顔色一つ変えたことのない<- Which would be for the times where there is that coward little shit that because of hesitation, fear and stuff sloppily swings an edged something, which although I am not sure if it is necessary for it to be an edged object in order to be valid, it was how it was written in the japanese dictionary. So like, in that case, it would be that the escorts are so veteran and stuff that they would never come up to a situation like that. And soooo, since there is no way for me to put all this, I just put the resume of what it meant. Viva!

2. そんな歴戦の傭兵が、赤い少女になすすべもなく殺されたApparently->なすすべもなく<- Means at one's wit's end... But I didn't find any way to add its message...
3. This whistle would be for when the person is kind of shocked because of something another person had done before or so. I have no idea how the heck I am supposed to explain more than that... Well, it's up to your memory to get the reference on what I said.(unless you've never seen this kind of whistle happening I guess)

Chapter 10

Transfer Order

Whether people at castles or at villages were shocked by seeing her, nothing of the sort would matter during the war.

Even if she was a human and a descendant from a famous spiritualist family, she wielded her power as a member of the Demon Lord army and was accepted. If she was strong, she would be able to keep living, but if she were weak, she would die and lose her place to belong to.

And more than anything... she was had been able to obtain a place to belong to.

If she was strong, she would be able to live on and protect the place she belonged to, and she was weak, she would simply lose such place. For that sake she would swing her halberd. When she was taking and losing life on both sides, Riku would become free. As if it wasn't unnatural at all, she would feel at ease in such times.

“Well then, let's go report, shall we?”

Riku was wearing the armor she had been carefully polishing.

Just as the color of her hair, the red armor was difficult to differentiate from blood. And so, every time she would go clean the armor, without her noticing, some blood stains would remain. As a human descendant from a spiritualist family, she was a target of despise and mockery, and there was no reason to give people more reasons for doing that.

Besides, she didn't wish for the impression of the Dragon Demon Division because of her stained armor.

“Yotto”(よっと)

Riku lifted her halberd she had similarly polished up to her shoulder.

Leaving that weight she had already become used to on her shoulder, she headed out by foot to the room her superiors were waiting. The blowing wind was refreshing and somewhat warm. Looking up to the sky, it was a radiant blue sky just like that day. After seeing that, Riku gave a faint smile. Since then, ten years had passed and she was now seventeen years old. The memories of when she was still seven were like a distant horizon, but she would remember that day as if it was yesterday.

How she was thrown down a cliff and being carried by the waves to that port city.

And the face of the demon who was more important to her than her life, who had saved her, who was about to die.

“Hey, the one there is that rumored...”

“Ah, that jumped-up human. So unfair, really.”*1

Riku heard the whisperings of gossip.

And because of that, her happy mood was blown away in one go. At the corner of her view, there were two demons looking at her full of mockery. She didn't really care, but she didn't like this back-talking either. And more than anything, she really hated to be brought back to reality. In that instant, she felt like using her halberd on them, but held herself back, knowing that if she were to cause trouble here, all it would happen was she being sent to confinement. The hand that had lost its intent slowly went back to its place, and Riku left the place at a fast pace.

...Pretending that she hadn't noticed anything.

“ ... ”

Not all demons looked with disdain to Riku. For instance, the

demon that had been together with her through her life in the Dragon Demon Division from the time she was seven years old acknowledged Riku's capability. To be fair, there weren't many demons that were like that to her to speak of, but after living together for many days, there were a few that were enough to be worth noting were being formed.

During these ten years, the Division had achieved many merits and increased in its size, and so having the number of newly recruited soldiers being many. From the very beginning, the Dragon Demon Division had always been composed mostly out of newcomers. And such demons had antipathy against Riku. In a certain way, this happening was only obvious.

After what happened before, ignoring the discrimination gazes that would be directing to her from times to times, she had finally reached the place she needed to get to. Fixing her hair with her hand, she lightly knocked the door. As she did that, from inside the room, a sharp voice of a man came in response.

"Who is it?"

Hearing the familiar voice she hadn't hear by a few days, her gloomy feeling was blown away.

Deeply inhaling some air, she raised her voice as much as possible.

"From the Dragon Demon Division serving the lieutenant general Leivein Adlar, second lieutenant Riku Barusak has returned."*2

"Enter."

"Yes!"

Straightening up her back as much as possible, she entered the room.

And then, she looked at the young man, who was doing his official duties. Comparing to when Riku first met him, his stature became much taller, and had grown two splendid wings. Slowly raising his view from the document he was looking, he looked at Riku with his never changing two sharp eyes.

“Is that so? You’ve done a good job, second lieutenant Riku.”

The corners of his mouth had slightly risen.

Hearing Leivein’s words of appreciation, Riku’s heart started beating fast.

Leivein, who had saved her, was Riku’s benefactor, and also the person she had sworn loyalty to. Indeed... It was only for her to hear these kind of words from Leivein that she swung her halberd. Kneeling using one her knees, she had deeply bowed.

“Yes! I’m very honored by your words.”

“I’ve heard that together with Vrusto, with about two hundred soldiers you had gained control of Perikka. With all the resisting forces eliminated and with control of the merchants, as a trade city, it will be very useful in the future. This time, you were noted even among the top brass. Charlotte-sama is deeply pleased with your deeds.”

“Could you be talking about that girl?”

For her to disregard the higher position this much, Leivein got a bit surprised.

Now that the Demon Lord is sealed, his younger sister Charlotte, in his stead, is commanding the demon race.

To Riku, the most she could be viewed as was as just “some important demon figure”. To her, what mattered the most was Leivein. It could be said that anything else didn’t really matter.

To Riku's actions, Leivein made an displeased gaze.

"It's the Demon Lord's younger sister, and his substitute. You should call her Charlotte-sama. Calling her like that is disrespectful."

"Yes, I beg your pardon."

"...Well, it's fine. From the achievements of this time, it has been decided for you to be promoted from second lieutenant to first lieutenant. Because of the promotion, a transfer order had been given to you."

"Transfer order?"

The moment she had heard that, she felt the impact similar to being hit by a club in the head.

Without thinking, Riku had approached Leiven. Because of how strong she had hit the table with her hands, great amounts of documents fell to the ground.

"Why!? Why can't I be in the Dragon Demon Division anymore!? If that's the case, I don't need the promotion to first lieutenant. My life was saved by commander Leivein. That's why I must fight for..."

"Calm down, first lieutenant Riku Barusak."

"Don't worry, you will still be aligned to the Dragon Demon Division. After one year, you will be able to come back here."

Hearing that, she stood rock still.

She would be able to come back eventually, so she didn't understand why it was necessary for her to transfer. And so, she asked.

"After one year, I will be allowed to come back, right? But if that is the case, then being transferred..."

"The reason for your transfer is for you to acquire experience, since you are someone that will eventually rise to

be an important figure. Being to a place you are not used to, many hardships will come after all. I will let you bring together with you a number of soldier as your subordinates... You should be thankful for me to be giving a recommendation on you.”

For the sake of acquiring experience, as someone that will become an important figure.

She had heard various words from his mouth, but all that really entered her ears was about when Leiven spoke of him giving a recommendation. Her respected and beloved Leivein had given her a recommendation.

Only that was enough.

Without saying anything, Riku put one of her knees to the ground.

Doing a respectful bow, which was one of the demon standards, she looked up at Leivein.

“Thank you very much, captain Leivein. After coming back, I will without doubt had become stronger and more than before a capable soldier.”

“Umu.”(うむ) (It means yes for those that don’t know)

Only saying that, he extended his hand as to say that she was dismissed.

Quickly leaving the room, Riku turned her back from Leivein.

Having been decided that she was to be transferred, Riku had a mountain of things she needed to prepare. In order to not make a fool of the image of Leivein’s Dragon Demon Division, she needed to make the preparations to the best of her ability. And so, Riku was very enthusiastic on that.

“I’m looking forward to what will become of you, Riku.”

From behind her, the voice resounded.

Unconsciously, Riku turned her head back.

Leiven's eyes were already turned to the documents, but even so, Riku was very happy.

Leiven always called her name together with her ranking. So having him calling her without any ranking title was really nostalgic to her.

Having the impression on how much she was trusted, she became even more motivated.

Because of that, she ended up letting out a faint smile.

“Yes!”

Doing one last bow, she left the room.

She swore to her heart that she would definitely correspond to his expectations.

—————

Replacing the in a good mood Riku, Piguro now was the one entering the room.

Leivein would as always be diligently focusing on the documents. But this time, right at the moment when Piguro had entered the office, he had lifted his head to look at him.

“What is it?”

“There were so many choices, so many choices.”

With his monocle shining, he came closer to Leivein.

Different from Riku, who was in high spirits, Piguro's mood was so bad it was falling to the ground.

Piguro's mother was Leivein's wet nurse. And other than that, he was also ordered by Leivein's father to be his friend and to protect him as a body-guard since the time he was only a child.

Following Leivein's promotions, the Dragon Demon little battalion, which was commanded by him, came through big changes and increased to the size of a division. The ten thousand demons serving under him, as a lieutenant general, was only appropriate.

Exactly because of that that the incident was the worst possible case.

"Why did you give recommendation to Riku Barusak? Even though I told you to recommend Momein or Shiruk rather than that thing."

Since then, it had been ten years, and even so, he didn't trust Riku at all.

Of course he recognized Riku's fighting prowess. Swinging her halberd around, her figure running through the battlefield was like the one of a battle devil. People that had as much power as her, even among the demons, weren't many. There weren't many, but there were people that were in awe of Riku, calling her [Red Devil].

But Riku Barusak was a human. And more so, someone of one of the spiritualist families. It was obvious that she was untrustworthy.

And that's why he believed recommending either the demons Shiruk or Momein would be better.

"It's very simple. Even though she has this much strength, she still have room for improving. And more than that, I'm intending on making her my Right-wing"

"Doing that is a mistake is what I've been telling you! As if I would let you make a human spiritualist your Right-wing!!"

With a loud sound, Piguro hit the table.

Right-wing, or so to say, could be said to have a similar to an adjutant.

The number two of the Dragon Demon Division was the staff officer Piguro. But, in the vital position of adjutant, there was nobody. He wanted Leivein to have that position filled as soon as possible, but he couldn't let Riku take the position of adjutant.

“Do you even know what you are talking about? If Riku Barusak becomes the adjutant, she becomes the number two of the division... You should already know what this would mean, right?”

The human Riku, who all she really had was physical power would stand above him. He would need to be asking advice to such a thing.

Just by thinking about that his head started to hurt. Besides that, if he let a human become an adjutant, the other divisions from the demon lord army would definitely laugh and look down on them. That's why he had listed other demons for the recommendation. But in the end, Leivein had ignored his proposals.

“That thing is strong.”

“I know. But you see, even if it is strong, but there is no meaning to that. There are also things like reputation.”

“That's why, in order to acquire that, I recommended it.”

Leivein drank the whole water of the glass that was near him all at once.

Doing that, it made one wonder how thirsty he actually was. With water glass empty, Leivein put it down back to where it was, doing a sound of the glass hitting the table.

“That thing will definitely not bite me. It's only a faithful dog I carefully trained.”

“The Dragon Demon Division is already an unified existence. For there to be somebody to betray...”

“Is impossible. Don’t tell me things I already know.”

“That thing is by far much more capable. Specially in the battlefield. Even after unsealing the Demon Lord-sama, it will definitely be of use to the Demon Lord army. But that thing has no social standing or someone’s backings. There is the problem with her being a descendant of spiritualists. So, in order to deal with those problems, what is the necessary thing to do? To simply obtain everything by sheer power. Building up achievements so that everyone can’t not recognize her strength, and moreover attracting many supporters. This is simply the best thing to do.”

Finishing saying what he wanted, he immediately turned his eyes back to the documents.

Piguro became unable to say anything further.

Her relation to spiritualists which burdened her from getting promotions must be made unnoticeable and negligible as soon as possible. If such is not done, then not only her promotion for right-wing, but most importantly, her affiliation to the Demon Lord army would be threatened.

In order to fix this, Leivein had sent her away. If Riku is capable of having another division to recognize her strength, then in the Demon Lord army, in which strength is the most important thing, she will have a successful career. The principle behind his decisions are reasonable, but even so, Piguro couldn’t accept it.

“Why... Why do you favor that girl? If it is about strength, then there are other people too.”

Leiven didn’t say anything to answer.

He only kept managing the documents silently.

Giving a sigh as if he was tired of this, Piguro left the room. But before he could even touch the door, it had been opened

wide in one go. The one there was Riku, looking to be in hurry. Because of that, her hair was a bit messed up.

“I’m very much sorry, captain Leivein! Ah, staff officer Piguro was also here.”

“...What is it, second lieutenant Riku Barusak?”

Piguro couldn’t hide his bad mood.

Riku also noticed that Piguro was in a bad mood. But since he was pretty much all the time like that, she didn’t think much about it. While bowing, she said...

“Yes, actually... I actually forgot to ask where I am being transferred to.”

“Are you stupid?”

Piguro held his head with his hands.

Perhaps with the slightest chance not... No, rather, without doubt, after coming back from the transfer, Riku would definitely have accumulated many achievements.

Thinking how this stupid person would soon become his superior, Piguro’s mood became even worse.

-
1. By jumped-up, it means someone that had risen through ranks, etc, very fast. I couldn’t find any other word to use, and since this one feels like is not very known to non-native speakers, I put this note to explain to those properly.
 2. 「レーヴェン・アドラー中将率いる龍鬼師団所属 リク・バルサク少尉。ただいま帰還しました！」Not sure if there is a better way to translate this... Well, it’s correct for the most part, with the issue being only about aesthetics over the text.
 3. It says “going back to earth” instead of eliminating or so. In english, literally describing it like that is kinda impossible, otherwise it would feel too much forced. It doesn’t really

has much worth anyway, so it is fine.

Names:

シルク: Shiruk

モメーン: Momein

Arc II

Battle of the Myuuz Castle

Chapter 11

Delivery of Goods and the Smell of Blood

Cutting through the night wind, there was a group riding their horses.

The black carriage and the horsemen wearing a black coat were blending with the darkness of the night.

If it wasn't for the sound of the horse hooves hitting on the ground, then except for the animals adapted to seeing in the dark, noticing them would have been extremely difficult.

The one leading all the fifty members of that horse group was first lieutenant Riku. Hiding under her hood the red hair that would stand out even at night, she kept concentrated, looking forward. She changed her gaze to a stone lying on the roadside which had some letters engraved on its surface. Giving one look to the letters, she once again looked forward. And then, still looking to the front, a horseman beside her raised his voice.

“Soon we will have contact to the target. Are you ready?”

“Yes, no problems.”

“Is that so? Good.”

The corners of her mouth rose.

Breathing the cold night air that was going against her face, it made her burning like feelings refresh a bit. Even so, couldn't be settled with just that. With her eyes shining in a fiery gaze, she spoke.

“To all soldiers. From now on, the mission will start. With the resolve to keep up even if your life is in risk, execute lieutenant general Leivein's order.”

“...No, ojou-chan. It was lieutenant general Gortoberuk’s orders, actually.”

The horseman beside her... Warrant officer Vrusto, said while giving a sigh.

Vrusto’s eyes looked like they were dead. His usual combative face nowhere to be found. Only showing a apathetic expression, his horse kept moving on.

“Besides, it is not a job that you need to risk your life for, you know. The job given to us was to just to send lieutenant general’s birthday present to his grandchild.”

“...It’s the transportation of important goods...”

“Yes, yes... Ahh, why did I need to be transferred as well...? You are already seventeen, so you don’t need me to babysit you anymore.”*1

Riku didn’t say anything to answer.

She thought it was very rude of him to say he was babysitting her, but she didn’t feel like answering to the provocation.

She would complete her task perfectly. That was the one dominant thought in her head. In order to protect the place she belonged to, and to become a more useful to Leivein even if it was only a bit, she would act.

If it was for that sake, even if it was some chore that couldn’t even be considered a job suitable to be given to a first lieutenant no matter how one would think. Something such as the chore of sending a birthday present, even that she would do.

She would send the package not too soon, nor too late from the time lieutenant general Gortoberuk ordered to send it, but right at the time. Of course, during the course, that present mustn’t suffer any damage. Sending the present in a perfect state too was one of Riku’s responsibilities.

“Like I was saying...You are putting all this enthusiasm in the wrong place. You should be angrier about this unreasonable job. Good grief, and also what was captain Leivein even thinking? From anyone that it could have been, for us to be transferred to lieutenant general Gortoberuk’s army.”

As she heard Vrusto murmurs, Riku kept going forward.

Gradually, firelight began showing through the gaps between the trees. Soon they would leave the forest. And right after that, near there should be where Gortoberuk’s villa is.

This job, that from the Myuuz castle, where Gortoberuk was stationed, they had to go through the mountains and keep fast pace until nightfall, was about to end.*2

“I wonder if it is here.”

Leaving the gloomy forest, there was a castle in there that was so white it seemed to be made of chalk.

Because of the demon’s circumstances, they were forced to live hidden. And to such demons, it was said that Gortoberuk’s home was the one of most splendor. If Gortoberuk home wasn’t one of a demon’s but of a minister that served the king, then comparing it to the buildings from the noble’s district, the ones from the noble’s district were several times more elegant.

Pulling the reins of the horse, Riku slowly advanced towards the gorgeous gate.

“From the Demon Lord army third, under lieutenant general Gortoberuk, it is first lieutenant Riku Barusak. By the orders of the lieutenant general, I came to deliver the present to his grandchild.”

As she spoke to the gatekeeper, he nodded.

“The delivery was just in time. Good job. We will take care of the present. There wasn’t any damage, was there?”

“There were no problems... Here it is.”

Riku lightly made a sign with her hand.

Following that, together, the soldiers began an operation to lower down the present.

There was a reason why only for this time's job of delivering the present, fifty cavalryman were needed. It was simple. First, the amount of presents for the single grandchild was over thirty. And more over, each of them were fragile pieces of handiwork that had glass easy to break on them. Even with the slightest impact, they would end up breaking, and so, one soldier would be carrying a present, and for each one of them, the remaining would ride their horses near them as to protect the present.

Vrusto still considered it to be a wasting of time of capable personal. But since it was orders coming from Gortoberuk, there was nothing to be done about it.

Without saying a single complaint, Riku had followed as she had been told to.

Riku looking at the presents contents being carefully checked, and when she was about to give a sigh of relief, right at that moment...

“Huh?”

Suddenly, Riku felt a chill at her back.

While still riding her horse, she looked behind. But all there was there was the dark forest. The blowing wind was roaring. With that, she frowned. Although she kept looking at the roaring forest, nothing happened.

While looking to the forest, she thought there was something wrong in there. After finishing unloading the presents, Vrusto came close to her, sick and tired of the job.

“What’s the problem, first lieutenant Riku?”

“No... I kind of felt a bad feeling about something.”

“Stupid, you are only overthinking... Hm?”

Vrusto’s nose started to move.

Right at that moment, Vrusto’s face returned to his usual face full of ambition. His face that previously looked like he was about to die seemed like it was a lie. With eyes shining with ferocity, he looked at the dark forest.

“Girl...I am smelling blood.”

“Blood?”

“Yes, from behind. It’s coming closer.”

Riku regained her grip over the reins.

Making the horse turn, it slowly walked to the direction of the forest. As Riku came closer, her demon subordinates separated as to open a way to her. As the horse was slowly walking, Riku was gripping her halberd that was on her back. Her sharp eyes were look*3

“First lieutenant Barusak, are there any problems?”

The gatekeeper, who thought Riku’s actions were suspicious, came closer.

The gatekeeper was keeping his hand onto the sword at his waist. But Riku wasn’t even looking at him. She only looked at the darkness of the forest concentrated. With Riku not answering anything, he ran out of patience. When he was about to raise his voice, it happened.

The forest trees unnaturally trembled, and then, like a ripe fruit, some sort of black figure fell down to the ground.

When the figure was about to touch the ground, right at that instant, Riku wielded her halberd. And then, she pointed her

halberd to the black silhouette.

“Who is it? Depending on the answer, I will kill you.”

Being pointed by the halberd, the figure was moving in panic.

Riku, who was intently looking at the figure, let out a surprised voice.

It was actually a demon with rabbit ears. His whole body to even his long ears were covered in mud and sweat. His face and arms were covered in wounds and his breathing was unsteady. But even with all that, it wasn't that what Riku was surprised about.

What she was surprised about was that the rabbit eared demon was wearing an armor of the Demon Lord army. And more so, one with the symbol of the third army, which was under Gortoberuk.

It was clear that something happened with the main forces.

“F-f-from th-the third army, of the messengers unit, I'm sergeant major Roppu Nezaarand. I have an urgent report to the first lieutenant Riku Barusak.”

Roppu was speaking with a voice that was close to screaming.

Because of the unusual situation, everyone in the surroundings fell silent. Without doubt, it couldn't be good news. Riku looked at Roppu's face covered in sweat.

“What is it?”

Was the only words that left her mouth.

Roppu hurriedly started speaking the message.

“The fort Rein is suffering heavy assault from the spiritualist forces. Even though lieutenant general Gortoberuk himself participated the fight, it was a major defeat. The lieutenant general's forces successfully retreated to the Myuuz castle, but

at this state, they will soon end up being pushed into an encirclement.”

Everybody fell into deep silence.

Nobody did a single sound. Including the gatekeepers that were gathered nearby, everyone had their face color change. Most people lost the color of blood from their face and kept their mouths shut closed without being able to say anything. It was as if they were hoping that Roppu would suddenly say all of that was just a joke.

Nobody opened their mouth. Eventually, the silence was becoming more and more unbearable.

As to break the silence, somebody raised his voice.

“Hey, that’s a lie, right? Because, the Myuuz castle should have twenty thousand soldiers, right? Hey, you too say something.”

“Y,yes, right. Yes, it’s twenty thousand! There is no way for someone to corner this amount of force in one night...”

“Hahaha, it was a lie then. It’s obvious that it is a lie! Somebody say that it is a lie!”

But nobody could say for sure it was a lie.

Even if they wanted to believe it was a lie, there was no way they could really believe so.

Just by looking at the Roppu, who was full of wounds, that one could see how obvious it was that all of it wasn’t a lie. They didn’t know about strategies that were deployed against the spiritualists, but for the lieutenant general Gortoberuk to be cornered like that, it could be said that the annihilation of the third army was certain.

With much more the reason, now that she understood the situation, the halberd that was being placed right next to

Roppu's neck remained unmoved.

Looking at Riku, who was unmoving even by the slightest tremor, Roppu trembled a bit.

"L, lieutenant?"

"Roppu Nezaarand, was it? Can I ask you one thing?"

Riku looked at Roppu's round and teary eyes.

It didn't look like Roppu was telling any lies. Probably, the fort Rein indeed had fallen and lieutenant general Gortoberuk had been put in a difficult situation. But even so... No, exactly because of that that Riku needed to confirm something.

"Did you see the flags of the spiritualists that attacked?"

"The flags, you say? It should have been... One with an unicorn and another one with a griffon."

"A flag with a griffon?"

Hearing that, she unconsciously put her hand near her mouth.

Very old memories were emerging.

The unicorn family crest would be from the Bistolrur household. For generations it had been a spiritualist family whose head was always a female, and the current head of that family was a girl that should have the same age as Rook.

But the problem wasn't there.

"Yes, a griffon flag! A griffon emblem, right!?"

Riku started to press near her mouth with more strength.

If she didn't that, she wouldn't be able to stop herself from showing a warped smile. If she were to calm down a bit, she would instead be dancing in happiness. It was to that extend that she was happy. So happy that she couldn't bear.

A spiritualist family whose family crest was one of a griffon, it

could only be one.

“If there are spiritualists from the Barusak family, then I really need to go face them.”

If it was any other spiritualist family, she would just leave someone like Gortoberuk to his death and go back to Leivein.

First, going to an army that has is about to be trapped into an encirclement is difficult. In this situation, even if she were to go back to the Dragon Demon Division, nobody would say anything against.

But if the Barusak spiritualists were involved, then it was a different case.

Whether it was her little brother, or her father, or her big sister, she needed to prove she could crush them.

The people that didn't accept her were now in front of her eyes. Was there even a reason not to engage? No, there wasn't. In fact, not going to kill them was what was unreasonable.*4

Her arms and legs and her heart were being embraced by a indomitable intent. It made her want to break, twist, crush, to destroy until not even a single thing was left undamaged. From the insides of her body, a scorching happiness she hadn't felt long ago was going through her body, making it surge with a burning wrath.

“First lieutenant Barusak. Could it be that you...were secretly leaking information to them?”

The guard keeper that already had drawn his sword was now in a severe tone asking her.

Seeing the stupid gatekeeper with a stiff face, she couldn't keep herself from smiling anymore.

“Leaking information? Me doing that for them? Pffhahahahahahaha!”

In a high pitched tone, she started laughing at the gatekeeper.

Without hesitating over doing it in front of so many people, she kept laughing. In that moment, the gatekeeper was shrinking away from her, but Riku didn't even pay any heed to it. After laughing for a while, she went back to her serious face. And then, she pointed her halberd to the useless gatekeeper that was suspecting her of betrayal.

"No way I would do something like that. Are you making fun of Leivein's Dragon Demon Division? Well, since you won't believe me anyway, what about if I go take a few of their generals' heads? Whether it is one, two or three."

Still with her serious looks, she looked at the gatekeeper.

While looking at the halberd that was pointed right in front of his nose, the gatekeeper weakly fell down, sitting on the ground. Completely ignoring the gatekeeper that had completely lost his boldness, she moved her halberd aside. Turning away from the gatekeeper, she looked at the fifty demons she had brought along with her. Like they were already imagining what was about to happen, most had faces that were sinking into despair.

With a tone of voice not different from her usual, she asked them.

"What was the job that was tasked to us?"

"It was... Delivering the present and going back to the Myuuz castle."

Among the soldiers, one person timidly answered.

And to his answer, Riku nodded. Putting her halberd onto her shoulder, she exchanged glances with the anxious soldiers.

As always, her face was expressionless, but her eyes were shining with ecstasy. Magnificently, Riku declared.

“Yes, until we come back to the castle, our job isn’t finished. Even if there is something hindering us along the way... Don’t worry, I have a plan.”

1. 「へいへい。 あー、なんで俺まで異動になんだよ。嬢ちゃんも17なんだからさ、子守りなんていらねえだろ」I’m not sure what exactly this is... I don’t know exactly how I am supposed to be translating this one. Whether it is because in japanese, having the hey hey and the ah like that is no problem or if the hey hey has a proper meaning or something... Well, even so, the message that was intended to give is still there well enough at least. Note that this space is actually how it was there, so maybe he said hey hey, and then, after some time, he started speaking what he wanted to. Maybe?(Edit: It finally came to my mind what hei hei meant. Well, there is still the possibility of me being wrong here, but I still have some confidence of it being the case. So, as far as I am concerned, hei hei = yes, yes)
2. I don’t know what ->夜を呈して走り続けた仕事も<- is supposed to mean. In the japanese japanese dictionary (which means that the japanese dictionary is from japan -.-), it says that ->呈して<- is to offer, give, display, assume(shape), exhibit... But then, isn’t the meaning: a job which one would offer the night and keep running? If there are no expression in this one, then that is about what the literal meaning would be, really. Well, as expected I didn’t find any kind of expression related to that...
3. リクの鋭い眼は、風で揺れる木の合間に向けられていたI’m not sure what it is talking about.
4. 自分を認めなかった奴が目の前に陣を張っているのに、これを叩かない理由があるのだろうか。いや、ない。むしろ、これは叩かなければ意味がない。->陣を張っている<- I’m not exactly sure about how to translate this part. I guess that its meaning is that they have settled an

encampment or so, or are ready, in a formation... Well, putting this extra detail is kind of weird of an addition in english and not really necessary...

Names:

ロップ・ネザーランド: Roppu Nezaarand

レーン砦: Fort Rein

ビストールー: Bistolrur

ミューズ城: Myuuz castle

Chapter 12

The Secret Strategic Meeting at Myuuz Castle

The Myuuz castle was a natural stronghold.

It was close to the territory where humans lived and the spiritualists were aware of its existence.

But even in these two hundred years, it still wasn't broken through. One of the reasons was because it was surrounded by tall mountains. But it wasn't only that.

The main strength of the Myuuz castle was in outside of the mountain range. Around the mountains, there was a very deep forest that would confuse one's sense of direction. For the demons, with hidden marks throughout the paths and with their sense of smell, it was still possible to advance with some effort, but the reality was different for the humans. Even if they had enough luck to go through the forest, there was only one path to Myuuz castle. After going up the mountains, what would be lying in wait was fort Rein. Even if the enemy gathered many strong soldiers, by the time they would get there, they would all have accumulated exhaustion.

Inside the fort, with demons that were still full of energy fighting against the exhausted soldiers, the sides that would win and lose were very obvious. Without being able to take hold of the fort, many soldiers would perish.

But even so, every ten years, the Shiidoru kingdom would gather up soldiers to go on an offensive against the castle.

But even so, in these two hundred years, not even once did they succeed going through the mountains.

But that was until this evening.

“How... What in the world did happen?”

In one of the rooms of the Myuuz castle, there was the figure of a demon that was angry up to his limits.

With his hand, he brushed aside all the documents that were accumulated in his table. Just like a flood, all the documents were spread through the polished floor. But as if it wasn't enough to settle his anger, he threw a flower vase that . The azure vase that had been made with great effort made a impressive sound as it broke and its shards were scattered to all sides. The petals dejectedly scattered around and the water gradually drenched the documents.

“Lieutenant general Gortoberuk, please, get hold of yourself!”

As he was saying that, the staff officer rushed over to Gortoberuk, who was losing his mind.

But right when the staff officer got close to Gortoberuk, he was glared by him. His eyes that were already becoming bloodshot produced an force that except for the staff officer, who had always been together with Gortoberuk, serving him in the good and harsh times, made everyone in the room scared.

“During the time that I had been entrusted with this fort... During these one hundred and fifty years, not once was it broken through. Not only once!! Not only once, you know!? Then, why did it end up like that!?”

“Lieutenant general, please calm down.”

“There is no way I can be calm!”

Gortoberuk drew his long sword.

With his state of mind, he was well capable of cutting

someone's head off right now. If he was handled wrong right now, then perhaps everyone reunited in his room could end up losing their heads. The staff officer shrank away, but he knew that if he backed off right now, things would end worse. Mustering his courage and giving a deep breath, he advanced forward, wondering whether he was capable of stepping his foot inside the range of Gortoberuk's long sword.*1

"Your anger will cloud you from doing correct decisions."

"Tch, I know that!"

While saying that, Gortoberuk sat down on his chair.

But even so, he couldn't completely keep his anger under control. His forehead was full of popped up veins and his eyes were still bloodshot.*2

"Hey, did you send the messenger?"

"I sent one to the nearest of our garrison, and the messenger will probably pass by Barusak's squad that are now delivering the present to you grandchild. But the chances of him getting there is extremely close to zero."*3

"...Unfortunately, it is hard to expect any reinforcements."

The staff office apologetically added up his comment to the other subordinate's report.

The surviving soldiers inside the Myuuz castle were only ten thousand strong.*4 Taking away the soldiers that were necessary for protecting the castle, the amount of demons that were usable for combat were in between eight thousand and nine thousand. There was also the problem of there being demons that had given up because of how the historical Rein fort had fallen. When the lieutenant general Gortoberuk asked for advise, all that he was told was to somehow boost the morale of the troops, but at this point, to keep it from falling even lower was already the best it was possible. Once the

morale had fallen down, increasing it from there was something next to impossible to do.

“When fighting against spiritualists, even against a small amount, it is necessary to prepare many more soldiers. The incoming spiritualists are about five thousand strong... This is a bit bad for us.”

“Bad? That is just perfect!”

While Gortoberuk tightly grasped his sword, he hit the floor with it, putting his hatred onto the blow. With the tremor, the broken shards in the floor were trembling. A crack opened in the floor and its tiles flipped over.*5

“Just report to Charlotte-sama that we annihilated those foolish spiritualists. There is no need for a humiliating report of defeat! ...From now on, we will attack.”

“We will attack? I can’t agree with this!”

His adjutant’s face instantly turned pale.

Not only in soldier strength they had disadvantage, but the morale of the soldiers were low. The adjutant couldn’t imagine them winning no matter how.

“Fm, then, you are telling me that we should go for the siege? Doing that is what it actually is foolish.”(ｼﾝ)

Gortoberuk snorted.

“If we go for the siege, then the soldier morale will be decreasing even more. At least, they don’t have much knowledge of the terrain. Before they finish scouting through it, attacking is the best plan.”

“Indeed... But, even if we confront them, there is no way for us to win.

Even if they were to go attack, they still needed to think out a plan.

If they were to recklessly attack the spiritualists, they would only fall before their power. If their numbers were greater, it would still be possible for them to press onto them. But,

“Yes, that’s just as you say. Well then, what should we do?”

Gortoberuk next looked at the staff officer. The staff officer had his finger near his chin and started deeply thinking.

“Well... To me, the reason why the fort had fallen so easily really picks my interest. In order for us to not lose our way, we use the marks that are around the forest. But those should have been only possible for us to understand. For the spiritualists from this time, as to why they were able to get to the fort without getting lost... The only possibility I can think of is that there is a traitor between our ranks.”

“You should think about something like that later! The traitor is obviously the dog that Adlar raised anyway. There is no traitor inside the castle now, so we should only focus in thinking about our plans of attacking.”

Gortoberuk rejected his staff officer’s thoughts on that. But even so, the staff officer still felt some kind of bad feeling lingering at the corner of his mind. Deciding it was only his imagination, he shook his head. Rather than that, he knew that it was important for them to go attack the enemy as soon as possible. If they weren’t fast, the spiritualists would besiege the castle and cut them from receiving supplies. As the time would pass, the food stocks would diminish and they would lose any chance they had of winning.

“Let’s see... Let’s split our army into two. Then, attack the enemy from two sides.”

“A pincer attack? Can we even do something like that?”

A question mark floated above the adjutant’s head. If they still had the fort, they could do a pincer attack coming from there and from the castle. But right now, it was impossible.

Being asked about that, the staff officer nodded while making a serious face.

“Let’s say, if general Gortoberuk were to take part of his army and go on an offensive outside the castle himself, how would the enemy react?”

“Well, the general went out... The spiritualist would send their soldiers after him.”

“Right? That’s where we will be aiming for. We would only wait for the spiritualists turn their back from the castle, and with the soldiers that would be on standby at the castle, we would attack them from behind.”

“I see now.”

As he brushed his prided moustache, Gortoberuk nodded.

“And on other hand, if they go after the castle, then I’m can simply go attack behind them. In doing so, we would be able to cause them irrecoverable losses. Would that be your plan?”

“Yes, that is exactly it.”

The staff officer slowly . Gortoberuk smiled with confidence. For this plan to work, it was needed for the garrisoned troops and the troops outside to cooperate perfectly. But While making a sound, Gortoberuk stood up from his chair and held his long sword towards the ceiling.

“Immediately ready the preparations for battle!! Soon, we will be attacking those filthy fellows!!”

—————

Meanwhile, the spiritualists also were having their own discussions about the war.

Inside the headquarters pavilion, there were four spiritualists discussing. Among those, there was the Bistolru household’s young family head, Selenstinna Bistolru. A girl with short hair

and eyes with visible white between the iris and the lower eyelid*6. Because of that, she could be said to have a very peculiar appearance. But even so, the chestnut-colored hairpin that was keeping her front hair place gave her a certain girlish appeal. Because Selestinna was participating of her first war since she became the head of her family, she was tense, but she was even more tense because of her childhood friend that was in front of her lost in thoughts.

Her childhood friend, the next head of the Barusak household, Rook Barusak, was now looking at the map, and with a serious face, thinking about something. While his usual face was of someone that lacked interest in everything, she was also charmed by his serious face.

“...Seles, is there something on my face?”

Because of how she was intensely looking at his face, thinking of how weird it was, Rook raised his head to look at her. In panic, she shook her head.

“The-there is nothing on it. More importantly, what are you being so self-conscious for? Are you stupid, Rook?”

“Self-conscious? Well, it doesn’t matter. I’ve seen through the enemy strategy. They will split into two armies and look forward to attack us from two sides.”*7

As if it was nothing, Rook just said what strategy the enemy was going to do. Since he started to think, only a few minutes passed. Selestinna put her hands to her mouth.

“Well, that was very fast. On what basis are you saying that?”

“You see, I’ve just got new information. It says about their strategy. It is from that Kurumi girl that is infiltrated within the Demon Lord army.”

“Rook is really amazing. Just with these informations, you are really making a name yourself.”

Selestinna remembered about the time when they attacked the fort.

She thought that it would end up with them getting lost like always, but it was different this time. With Rook guiding the army, by relying on the stones that were on the roadside, they were able to easily find the way that led to the fort. He himself said it was a secret and didn't tell anyone about how he guided them there, but this too was probably information he got from that demon called Kurumi.

She was impressed of Rook because he was able to get allies even from demons. But while there was that, because he had been only relying on that demon and not relying on herself, that had been fighting alongside him, was a sad reality.

“...Did something happen to you?”

By saying that, he must have noticed her lonesome face. Rook was now looking at Selestinna's face. Because of how sudden he looked at him, she didn't have time to prepare her heart. With even her ears red, she shook her head in a incredible speed while blushing.

“N-nothing happened, such a thing!!”

“Is that so? Then it's fine, but, actually I have a request for you.”

“A-a request, you say?”

Selestinna had never been asked for anything from Rook.

With her heart jumping, she was waiting for Rook's next words.

“Actually, from now on, I need to go back to home.”

“Eh?”

“I'm intending to leave the Barusak army that will be remaining here to general Toudo. Ah, general Toudo is a

spiritualist that had been serving the Barusak household for a long time, so he is someone you can rely on. But... This time's enemy... Is Gortoberuk. He is a strong opponent, and I'm a bit anxious on whether Toudo can win or not. That's why I am asking you Seles."

Rook took her hands, with their fingers entwining each other. Her white hands became slightly reddish.*8

"Please Seles! Win the battle!"

Seles heart had decided.

Rook is relying on her. She must use up all of her strength in order to be . Then, at dawn after the won battle, she would magnificently arrange the Myuuz castle, and in there finally, she would confess to him. As she was being submerged by her sweet delusions, Rook left the pavilion.

But Seles didn't notice what happened after that. Rather, nobody had noticed.

"Alright! Seles confession event GET!"*

With a fist pump, the next Barusak head cheered in joy.

1. 勇気を振り絞るように深呼吸をすると、大剣の間合いに入るか入らないかのところまで足を進めた。It feels like ところwas supposed to beどこ. Other than that, not much.
2. Popped up veins as to show how he was angry. It would be that thingy that appears at people's forehead at mangas and etc when they are angry. If you still don't know, just google it.
3. 「一応.....一番近い味方の駐屯地と、お孫様へのプレゼントを配達中のバルサック小隊へ向かわせたそうですが、無事に到着する確率は限りなくゼロに近いかと」
I don't know well what this part is supposed to mean ->一番近い味方の駐屯地と、お孫様へのプレゼントを配達中のバルサック小隊へ向か

わせたそうですが<- The ->と<- in particular feels out of place. Well, I don't know if it has any other functions that would actually make the way this dialogue was phrased out make any sense.

4. ミューズ城の残存兵力は1万弱だ I guess the weak kanji is to say like instead of ten thousand strong, it being ten thousand weak... Since there isn't stuff like that in english, there is no way for me to put it like that.
5. 床はひび割れ、岩がめくり上がった。 I have no idea what is that... めくり上がった。Normally it would be flipping over, but it says rocks ->岩<-... Then, where those rocks came from? I put tiles because I couldn't find any solution other than just going with the flow of the context.
6. 短髪にというキツイ顔立ちの少女だったがwhat in hell is that... 三白眼 Even with the description and googling it I still can't understand what it is talking about... Just thinking about this traumatic event makes me mad, because things that can't really be translated makes me mad, because I am a lazy person that wants everything easy and don't want to google stuff for more than ten minutes for each thing that literally makes no sense until I solve some math like logic after checking a Japanese japanese dictionary in JAPANESE(which means, not the japanese japanese dictionary that is japanese to english)because normal japanese dictionaries proved not to be very reliable :c Well, I guess in this case, the enemy was just too strong for any dictionary to bear... I just copy pasted the description... Even reading it, I still can't get the image of how it would look like.....
7. 軍を二軍にさせて襲ってくる『掎角の計』だね」Some reference to the three kingdoms story, I guessssssssssss? I dunno... I don't have any idea -.- It still is a pincer attack, though, so its fine.

『犄角の計』

8. 白魚のような手が、ほんのり赤く染まっている。It compares the whiteness to some species of fish... And, uhhh, I don't think it is worth putting it, since most people won't have the slightest idea what kind of fish it is...(nor do I -.-) But if you want me to add this in, or other future references that don't really contribute to the description of scenes and at the same time are kinda funky to put in english or need certain knowledge for one to make sense out of it, feel free to say so... Well, at least, every time it happens, I will put a note on that.

Names:

セレスティーナ・ビスツール: Selestinna Bistolru

トード: Toudo

Chapter 13

The Offensive Against the Fort

Winter was approaching.*1

With temperatures enough to freeze fingers, it was almost as if general winter himself was preparing to launch an offensive. Before one would notice, the breathed air had already become white. If rain was to pour, all this rain would have already turned into snow. Once there was snowfall, the shape of warfare would change. As snow would accumulate, the movement of the troops would slow down and transportation of food would become harder. For the spiritualists, the coming of winter was a disadvantage. And of course, to the demons that were restricted to the food stocked up in the castle, the long-drawn siege would be disadvantageous as well.

In other words, both the demons and spiritualists were eager to end this war. But in both of their dictionaries, there was no such word called truce. Until either side was completely destroyed, this war wouldn't end. This time's case, whether the demons would go for a do-or-die attack or if they were to seclude themselves in the castle, the flow of the war would change. In case the war would change to a siege, the battle would be decided by which side gives up first.

“...Well, I can't imagine lieutenant general Gortoberuk going for a siege though.”

As she was breathing out white vapor due to the cold, she sighed.

Gortoberuk, who would mostly deal with things using strength, was a demon that she just couldn't imagine going for a contest of endurance by holing himself up in the castle. In

order to clear away the disgrace of having the fort being taken from him, he would just plan a strategy to go for and attack without doubt. Either way, Riku couldn't predict what kind of battle it would turn out to be.

But, rather than knowing Gortoberuk next moves, it was more important to think on how to take the fort back. It looked more or less something stupid to do, but even so, the forty nine demons were still following after her. Including her, all of them were going up the mountains. By the way, the one that wasn't there with them was at the foot of the mountain stand-by, still mounting on the horse he had been riding on so far.

“Ha...Ha.... Just, a little bit more.”

Said Roppu Nezaarand while feebly breathing after he stopped his feet. With his ear and arms full of bandages, his figure was very pitiful. Putting his hands on his knees, he was catching his breath. No matter who, it was clear to anyone that would look at him that he was straining himself.

“Really, you are too weak.”

“Hey, ojou-chan. Shouldn't have it been better if we had left that rabbit brat at the lieutenant general's villa?

Vrusto was whispering next to Riku's ear. Different from Roppu, Vrusto didn't show any signs of being tired. In fact, demons that would show signs of exhaustion actually were what was very uncommon. Except for one of the demon races, the demons in general would ever so often have more physical strength than humans. If Roppu was at his perfect condition, he would most likely have been able to go up a mountain such as this one in one breath.

” I'm definitely being suspected of being a traitor. If I bring him along, I can prove I've not been planning anything along the way.”

“I see. That’s why you’ve been dragging this dead weight near you. I thought you were doing it just to have someone guiding us.”

“Well, there is that too.”

As a messenger, Roppu had been trained. And so, he knew very well about the terrain around here. This time too, he used a secret path and was able to escape from the fort. The path Riku was going through now was one different from the one generally used. Because it didn’t go through maintenance, it had rocks and branches that fell from the big trees around. Because of that, one could end up tripping without properly paying attention. In fact, there were soldiers that were covered in dirt just because of this reason. But even if it had all these problems, the enemy wouldn’t be aware of this path.

“Ah, uh... First lieutenant Barusak, the place you had pointed in the map before is about somewhere in here.”

Right at the time Riku stepped her foot onto a branch, Roppu humbly declared.

Just by turning your head, through the trees, it was possible to see the stone fort. One way or another, they were able to successfully go to the rear of the fort through a roundabout way.*2 The place that general Gortoberuk’s flag used to be set now had an unicorn and a griffon flag, both fluttering in the wind as if they were intimate to each other.*3 With the corners of her mouth rising, she rose her right hand to signal her soldiers to stop.

“Thank you, sergeant major Roppu Nezaarand. For now you should wait here. That, unless you want to follow me in order confirm that I’m not a traitor.”

“Th-that...”

“What about if I take two or three enemy general heads? Would it be enough as a proof? Well, although I don’t think

there are any really good generals sitting in that fort.”

The general that was leading all this must be without mistake glaring at Myuuz castle at the plains down the mountains.

This fort capturing was only the appetizer before going for an offensive onto the plains. She needed to properly savor the taste. Riku lightly licked her lips.

“Now then, we will be proceeding according to the plan. Are you ready to take that dirty flag down?”

The forty nine demons all silently nodded. There were some demons that had their faces twisted in desperation, but Riku ignored it. In reality, Riku was a bit anxious about whether it would properly work or not. But then, if she were to behave like that, nothing good would come out of it.

“The attack will go with the five people we decided on before. The rest should follow warrant officer Vrusto’s directions.”

“Understood. Don’t die, ojou-chan”

Seeing Vrusto indiscreetly saluting to her, Riku gathered the four people she had selected before. They were demons of smaller stature that were more developed in terms of agility rather than strength.

“Don’t worry, I will be the one facing the general. Besides, not everyone are spiritualists in there. They should have mixed in many normal foot soldiers in their army. That’s why you all you will need to do is swing your sword around to your heart’s content. Once you think the situation is dangerous, you should run away from the fort.”

“”Yes.””

The four demons vigorously nodded. And then, Riku, who saw their confidence rise, once again made a sign.

As she did that, this time, five demons that had confidence in

their physical strength went forward. All of them were strong enough to easily crush a horse. Riku herself and the four demons she had chosen got on these demon's arms respectively. The foothold was bad, but even so, by crouching and leaning on her right knee, it was possible to get some extent of balance.

“Uh... Are you really planning on invading the fort like that?”

With a worried face, Roppu raised his eyes to the direction of the fort.

“The fort was firmly build. Since it didn't fall in these two hundred years, then without siege weapons or big hammers, there is no way to invade it. We don't have this sort of things prepared, so isn't it fine to do it this way?”

“But we thought we had taken a secret path...”*4

“Which side do you think the people at the fort are being more watchful?”

The Myuuz castle is being surrounded and the demons don't have any army coming from the mountain side. With that, the only thing to be worried about is demon reinforcements coming. If something happens at Myuuz castle, the spiritualists that are surrounding the castle would definitely contact the people at the fort. Anything else don't really need much attention.

“In other words, this side has low priority. Rather than aiming for the well guarded part, it's obvious that it is better to aim for the weaker one.”

Saying that, Riku looked forward. By straining her eyes, it was possible to see the tiny figures of guards protecting the fort. But not a single one of these guards were looking to her direction.

“Well then, let's start, shall we?”

With that, the five muscular demons started moving. The demon whose arm Riku was on was in concentration, determining in which angle he should aim. The same was for the remaining four demons, calculating the distance and so on. Riku, who was a human, didn't have good eyesight like demons. Perhaps it would have been possible for her to increase her eyesight with spiritualist arts, but she wasn't able to use them. In order to not disturb the demons that were diligently working on the calculations, she could only held her breath.

“We will go now. 3...2...1...”

The demons swung their arms with all their strength, and with that, Riku was thrown high in the air. Right at the moment when she was thrown, she used her leg strength to add impulse. After that, there was no return. With the cold wind strongly blowing at her, it felt like a thousand needles were prickling her face. But pain of this extent didn't matter. In Riku's eyes, only the fort that was rapidly nearing closer was being reflected.

“Hm?”

At the moment when the soldier standing on the fort noticed about it, everything was already over for him.

Right at the moment the soldier turned his head, Riku's figure suddenly right in front of his nose. Riku, who was flying through the air, extended her right feet frontwards and kicked the soldier in his belly. While still having her foot through the soldier who had fallen like a rag doll she drew her halberd. While thrusting her halberd at the neck of the guard that was lying on the floor, Riku gave a smile to the other guards.

“Good afternoon. It's been sudden, but can you do me the favor of dying?”

Of course she didn't wait for an answer. She didn't need an

answer anyway. Raising her blood covered halberd, she rushed forward, cutting down the soldier's arm who was about to draw his sword, and decapitated another soldier that had been in panic.

"Shit, why is this red haired demon here!? It's too strong!"

"Su-surround it! Let's bring it down with numbers!"

As to surround Riku, the many guards approached forming a circle around her. They seemed to aim for doing an combined attack from all sides. As she was thinking whether she should make a path out of the encirclement through brute force or look for an opening, at that moment...

"As if I would let you!"

Coming from the sky, the demons suddenly appeared in a flash. *5

With the sudden appearance of another enemy, the soldiers at the fort got their formation scrambled. With that, it became possible for Riku to break through it by herself. The four demons that were a bit late in taking part in the fight

"First lieutenant! Leave the small fries to us."

"You should go after the big ones we can't defeat!"

While soaking their small swords in blood, each of them were speaking in turns.

Even without them saying, it was what Riku was planning to do, but actually being said that felt very different. With that, Riku's mouth turned into a happy smile.

"I will leave this place to you!"

Saying that, she left the place.

Not expecting that they would have been broken through, the soldiers were taken by surprise. Mowing down such soldiers, she rushed inside. She had thought that it would be a

bit problematic for her to swing her halberd in the inner parts of the castle, but it seemed that they were unnecessary worries. Originally, it had been a demon fort, and so in other to be in accord to demons that had builds of over two meters, the ceiling was high and the corridors were wide. That's why she would be able to swing her halberd to her heart's content.

“The de-demons are attacking!”

“It's a monstrously strong red haired demon!!”

In response to the many shouts throughout the inner part of the fort, soldiers wearing spiritualist clothes appeared. The spiritualists that were wearing clothes which had that nostalgic Barusak crest were now coming at her with the demon banning swords. The swords that had demon banning power infused had the might of blowing off an arm just by grazing it. But that was only applied to demons. Therefore, Riku rushed at them without any worries.

“Did it lose its mind? That demon.”

Against the spiritualists that were giving off smiles of ridicule, Riku instead sent back another smile.

“The stupid ones are you.”

As if doing a run-up, she increased her speed and jumped upon a demon banning sword that was thrust at her. Sending the spiritualist that had his mouth opened in surprise flying with a kick, flying to the direction of a spiritualist from the Bistolru behind him, who was preparing to shoot an arrow. Lightly deflecting the arrow, she cut his head, sending it flying. With that, she had finished that spiritualist from Bistolru, that now had his head separated from his torso.

“One... No, two people.”

Giving a glance to the spiritualist she had kicked before, it seems that the shape of his body and neck had changed a little.

Perhaps because she had put in too much force, his neck had been snapped.

“Now, who is next?”

Now looking back to, just like ants, a bunch of spiritualists were overflowing the place.

Many spiritualists had expressions on their faces that were curious to look at. She thought it was because two of their companions had been killed, but it seemed to be for a different reason. Whatever it may be, from the start, Riku didn't hold interest in what their expressions meant.

Full of insanity, she was about to rush after them, but right at that time...

A blazing ball of fire appeared right in front of her eyes.

1. Approaching just so it is not coming ¬¬.
2. どうやら、上手く砦のへ回り込めたらしいWould rear be a proper description? I dunno the logic to decide which side is the opposite side if they are already coming from the back towards the fort that was supposed to be on a more vanguard like position... Sideception, maybe? Well, we can always use our imagination.

向こう側 = [] <-Input your opinion and be happy.
3. Nope, nothing.
4. 「でも、せっかく裏道を使って砦を抜けられたんですよ？ このまま攻め降れば——」It fills me with madness when I can't find a word even in the japanese japanese dictionary for japanese definition... Well, its attacking either way... Who cares about how cute it is to add up stuff for useless details ;-;
5. I don't know what ->一閃する<- is really supposed to mean... No matter how much I asked master google, he wouldn't

provide me with his teachings... I wonder if it is some secret cultivation method...

Chapter 14

Approaching Fireball

A blazing fireball appeared in front of her eyes.

It was only three fists of distance from her. In order to repel the attack, she rotated her halberd. Barely in time, the halberd defended from the approaching fireball in time, hitting at the tip of the axe shaped blade. With that, the fireball made a faint sound as it dissipated into pieces. Right after, Riku jumped back, landing with her left hand on the floor. Irritated, she looked at the surroundings. As she did that, she noticed that the spiritualists' expressions had slightly changed. Their faces had become much brighter in general. If one were to say, it was an expression that showed they still had hopes in winning.

Looking at such faces, it made her want to click her tongue.

“Who? The one that shot that.”

Of course, there was nobody that would answer her.

While she was calmly checking the faces of each spiritualist, as if a substitute for the answer of her question, another fireball was shot. This time, she knew where it came from. But even so, the fireball from this time seemed difficult to evade as well. Coming from the front, from their right side*2, the fireball was so fast that it would put demons, who would boast of their physical strength, to shame, if both were to be compared. Defending from the fireball with her halberd, she fixed her eyes at the spiritualist that had fired the fireball. Amidst a crowd of spiritualists which naively had hopeful expressions, on the direction she was looking at now, there was a single spiritualist with a serious face.

“That from before... It was your doing, right?”

That spiritualist was using a crossbow. He did have a sword, but it seemed like his main weapon was the crossbow. Right next to his sword, there was a quiver for his crossbow. Plainly looking at him, he wouldn't be any different from a simple spiritualist. But in truth, that same spiritualist was the one that had thrown the fireball. From this fact, Riku let out a smile.

“What a relief... There was still a good quality head that remained at this fort.”

Riku remembered a memory from very long ago.

Infusing the demon banning technique onto an equipment. Any spiritualist could use such a basic and practical technique. But, for the spiritualists that had talent, they would go up one level above.

“I don't remember it in details, but it was possible to infuse your own attribute in the weapon, right? In your case, it should be something like you putting your flame attribute in the arrow.”

Unintentionally, she smiled.

Back in the time when Riku was still aiming to become a spiritualist, such a thing as infusing her own attribute was a dream within a dream. As for now, it didn't matter anymore.

“You know well, demon girl.”

The spiritualist who was using the crossbow slowly spoke. He was looking at her as if he wanted to confirm something.

“Is that so? This much is common sense, isn't it? Well then...”

Riku was rotating the halberd in her hands. Apparently, from all the spiritualists gathered there, only that crossbow spiritualist had any considerable strength. In other words, if she defeated this one, then the rest didn't really matter.

“Which family are you from? Depending on which one, I can

go easy on you if you want to.”

“Don’t speak nonsense, you little demon lass!”

The crossbow spiritualist scowled, and in a low voice, said.*3

In his hand, he was holding five arrows. Shooting the five of them at once, they flew in Riku’s direction. The five arrows were flying like swallows,*4 cutting through the air. As they were doing so, at that instant of time, they caught fire. They were faster than the last attack and much more precise. Together with the sound of a roar*5, they were approaching. Once again, as to deflect the fire balls, Riku swung her halberd. But as if wanting to engulf Riku, the five fireballs expanded in size. In a blink of an eye, Riku was enveloped by the flames.

“Hmph, very easy. In front of us, spiritualists of the Bistolru family, demons are only equal to trash.”

The crossbow using spiritualist turned away from her as he snorted.

The spiritualists gathered around him and started to cheer.

“As expected! Worthy of being entrusted the fort by Selestinne-sama!”

“It was incredible! Please teach me how to do that!”

“You are very powerful, really... Eh?”

But the cheering ended there. That last comment which was unnaturally interrupted, rather than continuing it with words, a ear piercing scream was raised instead. Because of that, the crossbow spiritualist and the other cheering spiritualists all quickly turned back.

“So, you are a spiritualist from the Bistolru then.”

A halberd blew the fire away.

From inside the fire, without any wound, Riku’s figure appeared. Her military uniform was more or less scorched

down, but that was all. She didn't look like someone that had been on fire at all.

“Then, I don't need to hold back. Even though I was thinking about going easy if it was a spiritualist from the Barusak.”

Riku slowly walked towards them. While rotating her halberd, as if she was an envoy of hell, she boldly smiled. The crossbow spiritualist once again loaded another arrow. But it was already too late by then. Kicking the floor, Riku closed up the distance between them in one go. She jumped amidst the screaming spiritualists. Decapitating heads with her halberd, blood splashed around like a fountain. In order to save his comrades, he wanted to use his crossbow, but if he were to shoot it now, he could end up hitting them instead.

“If you were a Barusak, I would corner you to the point you would ask me to kill you. But then, because I would be going easy, I wouldn't kill you. I would keep you alive and hang you up at that cliff. Because I am kind, I wouldn't cut off your head until you died. But you are spiritualists from Bistooru, so...”

The spiritualist threw away his crossbow, and instead used his sword, aiming for Riku. His main weapon was his crossbow, but it couldn't be said that he was bad at using his sword. The spiritualist charged towards Riku. She was using her red armor, but there were still weak points in it. For instance, the joint points of the armor. The armor itself was resilient, but its insides were fragile. Covering his sword in flames, the spiritualist pressed forward with his trained physique. He was aiming for the joint point at her neck. Aiming at the defenseless*6 Riku, the spiritualist thrust his sword towards her. But...

“I will just kill you like usual.”

The girl covered in blood quickly evaded the attack. The movement was almost like a dance step. Losing its target, the

spiritualist that stumbled a bit forward, and Riku, by going around him and getting at his back...

“Goodbye, mister crossbow user.”*7

...She cut his head off. There was nobody capable of stopping her now. Lifting the head that now had dead eyes high, she gave a smile to the remaining spiritualists.

“Well then, what should I do with the rest of you?”

“Kill her!! We must get revenge!!”*8

Somebody shouted. With those words pressing them to act, the remaining spiritualists wielded their swords. The spiritualist charging forward with their faces twisted in fear was perhaps a bit pitiful. In an instant, the place became hell itself.

The blood covered girl butchered the spiritualists one after another while grinning. The time it took was only enough for making the corridor that was previously swept until it shone to become a sea of blood.

“As, as if I’m going to be killed! Let’s run away!”

Unfortunately, there were some spiritualists that were running away.

If somehow those surviving spiritualist; those spiritualist, which were from the Barusak, were able to retreat to their base, it could be said that then there would be spiritualist presence only at the plains.^{9*} But now there were only two people remaining in the fort. One had just been killed, while the other was still running to the exit. If Riku were to discover that he was from the Barusak, that thing she had said before about going easy would obviously only going to be torture. That’s why his only option was to run away.

“Damn it! What, what did I even do to deserve this!!”

Forcing his way through the heavy door, he ran down to the plains, which were located down the mountains. His aim was to get to the general Toudo's encampment. Not only would he receive protection, but also, he still needed to report about the fall of the fort. Of course most of it was just him wanting to run away, but there was a bit of sense of duty over the need to report what happened remaining.

"No matter how strong that demon is, it can't be considered an enemy to the generals! Fast, I need to report to them fast!"

He was going down the mountains, and having his skin scratched by going through the trees, it felt like his eyes would get hit by the branches.*10 But no matter what, he kept running. He only kept going down the mountain. And then...

"Escapee, one person spotted."

He was suddenly torn up by sharp claws.

In the place he was hit, he was bleeding. In his fading away field of vision, he noticed that about forty demons were surrounding him.

"Since he ran away, then would it mean they finished things up at the fort?"

"Warrant officer! The flag of the fort was taken down. It seems that it was settled."

"I see. Then, let's go back. Hey, somebody finish this guy. Instead of letting him live with these wounds, it's better to just kill him already."

Together with those words, that Barusak spiritualist's consciousness was cut off.

The fall of the fort wasn't made known to the spiritualists down in the plains. If they were able to get a report about it, maybe the outcome could have changed. If they were to send someone to check on the fort before going to war, maybe they

could have seen the moment the flag was taken down. But both the spiritualists and the demons at the Myuuz castle didn't think about confirming it. It was as if the possibility itself had been left out of their heads, as if they could only see the enemy before them.

It was very close to having this being an unreasonable concept that prohibited them from seeing the fort.

With both armies not noticing what was going on the fort, the war was going to start.

And the [battle of the Myuuz castle], a war that ended in a historical defeat, was now about to begin.

1. 左手を床に着け、腰を落とす。I didn't add the ->腰を落とす<-because in english, not only there aren't many ways to translate it, and not only those ways all don't really fit and feel weird overall, but also it is possible to visualize the scene accurately without this extra information.
2. It says diagonally right coming from the front(右斜め前方から), but what would diagonally right be? Would it be that the ball came from the left side, making a diagonally right trajectory, or it coming from the right in a diagonal way? Most likely the latter considering the context, but who knows.... Also, I didn't put the literal translation... It felt like it would be too weird for english.
3. 石弓の退魔師は、低い声で怒鳴る。This->低い声で怒鳴る<- is for when you are angry and yell, but it says that he did so in a low voice... So, what am I supposed to put? -.- ...Either way, to make it translatable in english, it isn't the literal meaning... It's not much to be enough to require a note, but even so... Yelling in a low voice, right?
4. Some species of bird. I think many people would get it

even without this note, but I still felt the necessity of putting it... Ah, and also, seeing how he shot the five arrows like that, it makes me wonder if there is some kind of mechanism like that chinese crossbow which would shoot at semi-automatic... To the point where I read, I didn't spot anywhere in the story that would confirm it, though. There is still the possibility of him loading the five arrows and shooting them all at once somehow, but this one is kind of...

5. 轟、という音とともに迫りくる。By roar, I guess it would be the sound of the arrow catching fire.
6. I'm not sure about this because the most possible case here is that the kanji was wrongly inputted by the computer when the author was writing the story. No matter how much I would look for, I couldn't find the meaning of ->無法備<-, but I could for ->無防備<-, which kind of makes sense in the situation. Well, not so much I guess... So, there IS a high chance of this being the wrong translation. Fortunately, it doesn't seem like it has much impact in the story itself.
7. さよなら、ピストルの石弓使いさんIt says that the crossbow user is from the Bistooru family, but I didn't add that because it seemed better without it. It is nothing that much relevant anyway.
8. 「か、かかれ！！ 敵討ちだ！！」I'm not sure what ->かかれ<- means... Well, but at least it shouldn't be too far from its real meaning if my translation is wrong.
9. This part was very weird to translate... Too philosophical.
10. 山をかけ降る。木々が肌に傷を作り、目に刺さりそうになる。それでも、走り続けた。I'm not sure what to put here.-> 目に刺さりそうになる<-

Chapter 15

The Beauty and the Beast

The wind of the night caressed her cheeks.

With her head hair being blown by the wind, Riku looked upwards. The flag fluttering at the night sky now wasn't the unicorn and the griffon flags anymore, but the Demon Lord army flag. Riku wanted to use the Dragon Demon Division flag, but right now, she wasn't part of them. With that said, she didn't feel like using lieutenant general Gortoberuk's flag either, so in order to have all parties satisfied, she put the generic Demon Lord army flag. The symbol drawn in yellow color of the Demon Lord army would even with the darkness of the night stand out.

"If it is this much, even from the Myuuz castle they should be able to notice it."

With more or less having the feeling of just finishing a job, Riku stretched herself. With only about fifty soldiers, they were able to take the fort back. With that, the spiritualists located at the plains, which were surrounded by the mountains, had been successfully denied a retreat path. With that, all it was necessary to do was to coordinate to Gortoberuk's moves well and defeat the spiritualists. With all she had done, without doubt she was going to get a promotion.

"L-lieutenant!!"

If she were to get promoted, then she would get to have Leivein praising her. Just by thinking about that, her heart warmed up. Even though she was under a cold weather, it felt to her as if she was in front of a fire place, comfortably sleeping.

“It’s a serious matter, first lieutenant Barusak!!”

But because of the hindering voice, the warm feelings flew away to somewhere. She felt the impulse of cutting down the owner of the voice with her halberd, but seeing the troubled face of that voice’s owner, she gave up on that. For some reason, a bad feeling went through her heart.

“What happened?”

“A serious matter!! Lieutenant general Gortoberuk’s army and the spiritualists started to move!”

“...They started to move?”

Unconsciously, she ended up repeating what the soldier said.

With Riku recapturing the fort, the situation for the spiritualist and demon sides should have changed. Taking that change in consideration, even though they should have been revising their strategies, without bothering to do that, both started attacking each other. It really made one wonder what they were thinking about.

“I don’t know the details really well but...”

“What is that mustache thinking about?”

Moving very fast, she went to the lookout.

In the lookout, inside a metal basket, a fire was lighted up, dimly giving off light. Under the lookout, there were some demon soldiers gathered, who were somewhat anxious. Some leaning forward and pointing to the direction of the Myuuz castle.

“Hey, that is really bad, right?”

“No, maybe it is something included in their plan.”

“How is the situation?”

As Riku came closer, the group of demons opened up a gap

for her to walk through. After responding to their salutes by with her hand, she leaned forward to see the situation. Doing that, she strained her eyes. Amidst the darkness of the night, she was able to see many fires moving.

“They are definitely going for an attack, but... Which of them are they?”

It was possible to know that there were many torchlight moving around. But, whether those were from the demon side or the spiritualist side, she didn't know well. She thought about go getting the binoculars, but unfortunately, it didn't seem she had enough time for that. Riku clicked her tongue.

“Is there someone with confidence on seeing at night?”

“Y, yes. I do.”

“You can see, right? Describe the situation in as much detail as possible.”

He changed places with another demon that was before looking. The demon soldier that had bird eyes narrowed his sharp eyes and started to observe the situation. Doing his job as well as he could, he explained the situation of the battle in detail. With each word he spoke, Riku and the other soldiers gradually became colder and colder. The person himself explaining, as if being afraid of the reality he was talking about, had his voice starting to tremble more and more by each word. Riku tightly grasped her halberd.

“Thank you, that is enough. You keep up watching over them like that.”

Lightly tapping his shoulder, Riku turned her look away from the battlefield.

“Half of you are to remain here. The rest must start making preparations for battle! Quickly!!”

“But what about the horses? If we go down to the foot of the

mountain, we won't reach in time."

"Isn't it fine to just use the ones the spiritualist had been using? There were about twenty of them, right? It's not enough? You have legs, don't you!? The slow ones should ride on horses, and the fast ones go on foot."

From now on, it was all a question of time.

If they weren't to do something, the demon side would receive a blow they wouldn't be able to recover from. As if to scold the herself that was too soaked in the aftertaste of victory, she slapped her own cheeks and started the preparations for battle.

Unexpected to the people at the fort who were in unrest, Gortoberuk and his soldiers were all calm.

Silently advancing, they had an increasing morale. The horses were going fast, and the foot soldiers were accompanying the pace. Together, the numbers were of four thousand, all going through the night, disappearing amidst its darkness. The strategy they were using was one that the staff officer had proposed; a pincer attack using a bait, and added in to that was the surprise attack they were going to do now. To Gortoberuk's point of view, the plan didn't really need to have any more twists on it. But his staff officer urged against not having them until the end, saying they were necessary as a precaution.

"What do you think about the strategy, adjutant?"

While riding his horse, positioned at the vanguard of his forces, he asked a question to his adjutant, who was riding next to him. Then, the adjutant showed a pleased smile.

"Tonight, they are definitely exhausted. From their capital to here, no matter how fast they forced the horses to go, it would

take at least five days. With them moving nonstop for five days without resting and even taking their time capturing the fort, they should have just finished building their encampment, and today, they definitely have their guard down.”

“That’s right, umu”

Gortoberuk became pleased with the answer, confirming his victory as he touched his prided mustache.

“The adjutant is really a worrywart. Indeed, their leader have come to participate in the war, but as far as I am concerned, it should be only a fourteen years little girl. I will show her the difference in experience between us.”

“As expected of lieutenant general Gortoberuk. If you are able to take down that lass of a leader, you might get a promotion to general.”

At the beginning, the adjutant was feeling very anxious about the battle, but that anxiety had already faded away. Right now, all what was in the back of his mind was only things related to things after they win the battle. At this dawn, which is about the time when they should have won the battle, Gortoberuk will definitely be promoted from lieutenant general to general by that time. If that happens, he will inevitably get promoted to a higher position. And if Gortoberuk were to give him a hand then, he possibly could get promoted to a even higher position. Normally, it would have been a promotion he wouldn’t be able to get even if twenty years had passed, and even so, he might get his hand on it in only one night. Thinking about that, he couldn’t calm down.

“Right now, concentrate in the battle in front of your eyes. If you start getting cocky and get a hole in your throat, don’t blame me.”

Gortoberuk said half-jokingly. The adjutant, without saying anything, smiled. The soldiers following behind them too

happily smiled. A fight that victory was so much visible is something that wouldn't happen often.*2 All of them were believing their victory as they were going through the darkness.

“Look! It's the spiritualist's bonfires. You guys prepare yourselves.”

The bonfires that were visible from afar were little by little coming closer. Together with Gortoberuk's words, the mood around became tense in one go. Their faces were seriousness itself, as if their relaxed faces from before were a lie. Drawing his sword, Gortoberuk raised his voice.

“Raise your battle cries!*3 Light your fires! We will annihilate the enemy in their sleep!!”

Their battle cries made the ground tremble. Lighting up their torches, their surroundings became clear all at once. But...

“What!??”

While still riding on his horse, Gortoberuk became speechless. The Bistolru and Barusak troops that should have been spread out there sleeping around the bonfires weren't there. Except for the fires still being there, they had completely left the place.

“What does this mean? The enemy soldiers... There is nobody here!”

“Don't low down your guard! They must be hiding somewhere around!”

Right in the instant the adjutant's got his message across, it happened.

Voices full of ridicule were coming from all the sides. Surrounding Gortoberuk's group, many black shadows stood up.

“Damn it, they got us!!

The adjutant’s voice was close to a scream. As if his scream was a signal, the whole spiritualist army attacked at that moment. Raising their battle cries, those voices made the mountains vibrate. Using their silver swords, they charged against the demons. The demons that were taken by surprise by those sudden actions soon were already crumbling down.

Receiving a spear strike, one would fall down from one’s horse and be chopped up by the spiritualists. Even if they were to jump back away from there*5, there would be spiritualists ready to attack around where one would land at. Even if they were to retreat back, they would just get killed. Even if they were to plan to break through them, themselves would be the ones pierced through, and even fighting head on, all it would result in was all of them dying. For the demons, the place had already been turning into hell itself.

But the demons wouldn’t just keep silent as they got killed. Cutting down a spiritualist, Gortoberuk raised his voice.

“Don’t be flustered! Press on!!”

“We must hold on! We must persist somehow!!”

The adjutant also shouted all the words he could think of.

Right now, all they could do was solely to depend on their plan. All they could do was to wait for the army being led by the staff officer that was following behind them to strike behind the spiritualist encirclement. But even this last ray of hope was brutally extinguished.*6 The adjutant ended up seeing that scene. While he was trying his best to increase the morale of his allies, he turned back to the direction of the castle, and then he saw an unbelievable scene.

“The castle... It is on fire?”

The castle that he was standing on not long ago; the Myuuz

castle was burning.

While periodically crumbling a bit, the Myuuz castle was enveloped by the red fire. The crest on the flag, which was of the Gortoberuk family and represented the third army, was being scorched down black.

“Im-impossible. The Myuuz castle... had already fallen?”

Without fighting anymore, he only gazed at the castle perplexed. And as to let such gap go by, the spiritualists weren't kind enough. From behind, the adjutant had his heart pierced through. The last thing he saw before dying was the scene of a unknown spiritualist exposing the head of the staff officer.

“Shit, we can't retreat anymore.”

Gortoberuk's head was now boiling in rage.

He losing his excellent staff officer and adjutant was like having lost both his arms. But as a leading figure of the Demon Lord third army, part of him was still composed. While he was bathing in spiritualist blood, he was thinking on how to break away from the current situation. Then, he started to try inspire the demons that seemed to have their morale fracturing.

“Don't scatter! Group up as much as possible! The real battle starts now!!”

With his sole voice, the whole field trembled. His voice that had the weight of a leader, although only a bit, it still had some spirit. Swinging his sword, he kept shouting.

“Let's cut the heads of these cowards as a sacrifice to our ancestors!!”

“The cowards are you, you dirty demons!”

A refined voice that didn't seem fitting to the battlefield followed Gortoberuk's words.*7

Riding on a horse, the one that got in front of Gortoberuk

was none other than Selestinna Bistolru. Putting down her crossbow to her waist, she held her slender sword. Looking at Gortoberuk in such way that people would think she held a grudge over him, she gripped the slender sword with more strength.*7

“For you to do such a thing as a night attack on a fair and square battle is outrageous! You should take back what you said!”*7

“Hmph, you, who were just about to do exactly the same thing, don’t have the right to say those words!”

Raising his sword, he kept on riding at full speed. Gortoberuk’s bloodshot eyes were aiming at Selestinna without doubt. In order to break through this desperate situation, by all possible means it was necessary for him to take down the enemy general so that the spiritualist side receive a blow to their morale. No matter what, Gortoberuk wanted to get his hands on Selestinna’s head. On the other hand, Selestinna also desired Gortoberuk’s head. To lead the Bistolru family forward, it was a necessary prestige, and besides, it was also for the sake of her loved one.

“Die at once, you little lass!”

“Go back to the earth, you senile old fool!”

Both swords collided to each other.

With her silver slender sword and his crude iron sword, both of them violently exchanged blows. Gortoberuk was getting angered with the silver colored sword that seemed so fragile but just wouldn’t break while Selestinna was irritated at the iron sword that wouldn’t even get a single crack from her blows and started to attack more fiercely. And like that, their duel kept going. Until either side get careless, the swordfight would continue. Such a thing, both of them understood that.

“Little lass... This is foul play. What is with this sword?”

Gortoberuk provoked Selestinna.

In fact, Selestinna was using her demon banning technique on her silver sword. The power she was using was a hardening technique. Her slender sword now had the hardness equal to the one of a diamond. Not seeing any problem with that, she replied as if he had asked a stupid question.

“Is there a problem for a spiritualist to use demon banning arts? Rather than that, it is your sword that has something fishy. If you are going to complain about my technique, then what about using another weapon?”

Just as Serestinna had said, in Gortoberuk’s sword, there were some mithril mixed in. It was a super hard metal that could only be harvested from a certain ore. Even to Selestinna, who as the head of the family would deal with a lot of money to a certain point, it was an material she rarely would see. Even for the demons, who had confidence in their muscle strength, it was hard for them to be able to handle that long sword Gortoberuk was using. For him to easily handle it was proof of his excelling physical strength.

“I can wait the time for you to change your sword.”

“Hmph, nonsense!”

It wasn’t possible to know when the sword fighting would have its conclusion. But the time for their stamina they were relying on to exhaust would definitely come. The instant Selestinna’s breathing became rough, Gortoberuk didn’t let the opportunity slip by. Warding off the slender blade that was already becoming dull, the sword flew to the air. With that, Selestinna shrieked.

“Ah, such a thing!”

“Since you were that weak, you should have focused on not letting your sword get stolen.”

Selestinna's sword vanished somewhere far behind from her. She didn't have enough time to go retrieve it back. With that, Gortoberuk happily smiled. If he was able to kill her now, the morale of the enemies would go down and the one of his own allies would go up. The situation might lighten up a bit with that. With all his strength, Gortoberuk raised his sword high in order to give her the finishing blow.*8

"This is the end, little lass!"

"I return to you these same words!"

Selestinna took crossbow that was before on her waist. There was already a bolt loaded in. Previously, he had raised his arm high, and therefore, his chest got completely defenseless.

"Damn it!"

In a rush, in order to evade the bolt, he tried to pull back his horse. But that arrow was shot almost from point-blank range. The bolt that was shot blew off Gortoberuk's right arm. With a faint sound, his arm, still holding to the sword, fell to the ground. Right in that instant, the arm was stepped on by the horse, becoming crushed to an atrocious shape. While covering the bleeding remaining part of his arm with his hand, he groaned in a low voice.*9

"You bastard... For you to have used a crossbow..."

"Did you forget that the spiritualist from Bistolru specialized in using archery?*"10 And also, was there even a rule saying that you can't use crossbows at war?

While saying that, she loaded up another bolt. Without being affected by the movement of her horse, she quickly aimed the crossbow at him.

"This is the end, Rudogar Gortoberuk"

And with that, she pulled the trigger.

Traveling through the air, the bolt went straight towards Gortoberuk's forehead. With only one hand, it was impossible to properly handle the horse, and he didn't have a sword to repel arrows anymore. All Gortoberuk could do was to watch the approaching arrow that was already right in front of his eyes.

"You damnable lass!!"

Together with his shout of resentment, right when he resolved himself over his own death...

"So this kind of situation is how it would be... "by a hair's breadth"? "*11

Right in front of Gortoberuk's eyes, something red cut in. The dull sound of the arrow being repelled reached Gortoberuk's ears. Somehow, it seemed the reddish thing protected him.

"This is... A halberd?"

It was a blood covered halberd. The halberd that previously blocked him from the bolt slowly distanced itself from his face. Selestinna was now pointing her crossbow at the other person rather than Gortoberuk. Following Selestinna's gaze, he ended up letting out a voice of surprise.

"Yo-you!"

That person leaned the halberd onto her shoulders.

The person was wearing a blood covered armor and showing a bold smile. The halberd wielding soldier looked at Gortoberuk and lightly saluted him.

"From the third army, first lieutenant Riku... It's been a bit late, but I completed my task and came to report."

1. Once again that ->掎角の計<-, which is most likely a

reference to the three kingdoms thing. Again, I don't really want to search a lot just for this single thing f I can just outright put what the plan is actually about, right?

2. Kind of weird... I don't think I did a mistake here, but it feels kind of weird, so I will put it there just in case. これほど勝利の図が見えた戦いは、そうそうない
3. 鬨の声をあげろ I don't know how to translate it in english... I mean, it IS "raise your battle cries!" in the literal meaning, but written like that, it just feels weird... Or is it just me? Well, if someone has a better way of saying this part, tell me please.
4. Nothing here.
5. 一旦飛行と後ろに下がったとしても、そこにも退魔師が待ち構えているのだ。
Whaaaaat? Now I really wonder whether the author is using expressions that exist... With一旦飛行 = being momentary flight. I guess in japanese it might not exactly be too weird, but for me that is translating all that in english, it is tragedy. Ah, this sweet despair... Now, all I can do is guess they jumped back ^^ By the way, I probably wasn't able to properly translate this one, and there is high chances the message it wants to pass isn't even similar to what I wrote...
6. だが、その頼みの綱は無残にも切り捨てられた後だった。I don't understand this ->後<- Why was it added there? -.- ...Either way, it still means that their last ray of hope is over regardless of the details.
7. It's a pain in the ass to add new notes for each mistake I find after adding all these, so I will just add this single one....
戦場には似つかわしくない洗練とした声が、ゴルトベルクの上を貫いた。//ゴルトベルクに親の仇でも見るかのような眼差しを向けると、細身の剣を握り直す。//
「正々堂々の勝負に夜襲など言語道断！ その言葉、あの世で詫びなさい！」// Stuff I have no idea what it means ->上を貫いた。//細身の剣を握り直す//その言葉、あの世で詫びなさい！<- So I just put what

they seemed to mean.

8. ゴルトベルクは、思いっ切り腕を大きく持ち上げた。Lack of description... It only says he raised his arms up. There wasn't even anything talking about his sword, but either way it still was probably to finish her off. I mean, there is NO OTHER REASON other than that... So it will be raising his sword, unless you are looking forward to a weird winning pose that ended as a tragic self-destroying maneuver.
9. 血を吹き出す腕を庇いながら、ゴルトベルクは低く唸った。Once again lack of details for a proper english translation. Even though people just love to fill stuff with details in only one line in japanese....
10. It's written with the kanji of bow, although she is definitely using a crossbow (and so did that other guy). Because of that, I can't really be sure if the Bistolru people are specialized in only crossbows or archery stuff all-round. (Edit: They are the all-round archery family.)
11. 「間一髪ってことかしら？」 Weird to translate in english... The message should be something approximated to that.

Names:

ルドガー・ゴルトベルク: Rudogar Gortoberuk

Chapter 16

The Red Haired Demon

“Wha, you... Why are you here?”

Gortoberuk was greatly surprised. His shocked eyes were looking at her, alternating between Riku herself and her halberd. By his looks, it seemed that he still didn't get a grasp of the situation. While still giving a light salute, she went through her report indifferently.

“The transportation of materials was successfully completed. On the way, there was those unpleasant spiritualist flags set on top of the fort, so I snapped them in two before coming here.”

“Snapped them in two? ...Do you mean that you recaptured the fort?”

“That's impossible!”

Selestinna raised her voice enough to be close to a scream. Putting down the hand that was being used for saluting, she looked at Selestinna's direction. Because of the out of the expectation developments making everything confusing, the hand Selestinna was using to hold her crossbow started to tremble a bit. With that, it was impossible for her to take aim properly.

“But I left there the ace of the Bistolru family, you know? There is no way for him to be taken down by something like demons!!”

“But it is the reality.”

Riku lightly rotated her halberd. With the blood that was stuck to the blade dripping away as she did that, a bit of the blood flew and stained Gortoberuk's prided mustache. But he

didn't get angry. He only kept looking at the scene dumbfounded while still holding the stump of what was left from his arm. *1

“Good afternoon, Selestinna Bistolru. Are you ready to die?”

“Ggh, if you get too cocky, I will make you suffer for that.”(ㄟ
ㄎ)

Selestinna narrowed her eyes. Reloading her crossbow with a bolt, she aimed at Riku. Looking at her acting like that, Riku couldn't help but do a bitter smile.

“How stupid.”

As if she had forgotten that previously Riku had defended against her prided crossbow shot, she shot at her one bolt after another. All which Riku had skillfully deflected. Strangely, all the bolts would fall to the ground without being damaged. Whether it was the quality of the bolts or Selestinna's power, it wasn't possible to know. But to Riku, such thing didn't matter at all. More than that, seeing that Gortoberuk was still showing no reactions made her start to see him in a bad light. After not knowing how many bolts has it been anymore, Riku decided to quit waiting and directly ask him.

“Lieutenant general Gortoberuk, please, give me the order. Whether it is to annihilate all these trash that dared to attack the Myuuz castle, or whether it is for us to retreat to the fort.”

With these words, Gortoberuk finally came back to himself.

Gortoberuk then slowly checked the situation of the battle. From the castle, flames were arising, and the flag had already completely burned down. His adjutant, staff officer and half of the elite troops he personally led were already dead. The demons that were being led by Riku were already giving all their effort, but they still weren't in enough numbers. Just as he was about to think about the situation, he tried touching his covered in blood mustache, but then remembered that one of

his arms had been blown off. While giving a bitter smile, he gave Riku the order.

“...I used to not trust you.”

“ ...”

“That’s why, first lieutenant, if you really are loyal to the Demon Lord army, then get the head of that girl that stole my arm. Once you get it... You can go back to the fort.”

Saying only that, he held the reins with his remaining hand, and then, he shouted in an ear piercing loud voice.

“All troops, retreat to the fort! This is a top priority order!”

Gortoberuk’s angry voice resounded through the whole battlefield well.

Turning his back from Selestinna, he retreated towards the direction of the fort. If they were to keep up this fight, complete annihilation would be inevitable. If they were to get annihilated, then retreating was first concern.

“Wa-wait up there!”

Selestinna couldn’t just let that run away. In that instant, she changed target and started following after Gortoberuk. But Riku didn’t let her get her way. Swinging her halberd with great force, she took down a bolt Selestinna had shot at her. In order to keep hindering her, Riku got in her way with her horse. Then, Selestinna gave Riku an annoying look.

“Get out of my way, you lowly red head!”

“Which one of us really is lowly, Bistolru pig?”

To get another bolt, she extended her hand to the quiver. Unfortunately for her, there were no bolts remaining. She had used all of them. The sword had been blown far away and although she still had her crossbow, she didn’t have any bolts to use. The head of the Bistolru household, Selestinna Bistolru,

didn't have any other ways of fighting remaining.

"S-such a thing."

"You didn't have enough prepared for the battle, right? Then, goodbye."

Riku swung down her red halberd. But the blade didn't reach her neck. In order to stop Riku, a great amount of arrows came from the side. Riku didn't have any choice but to change the course of her halberd. With her halberd, she deflected the arrows that were raining down on her. While she was still defending from the arrows, Selestinna turned around to another direction and started to retreat.

"Wait, you pig!"

"We won't let you! Protect Selestinna-sama!!"

The ones that shot arrows from the side were spiritualists from Bistolru. There was no way they would let their family head die. With expressions that seemed like they were ready to die if necessary, they kept shooting at her. Even if she tried to go after Selestinna, with their attacks, it was impeding Riku from being able to follow after her. Riku clicked her tongue.

"What a pain."

Riku stopped defending from the arrows. After pulling the reins with full force, she charged after the group that were shooting at her. Going through the rain of arrows, Riku readied her halberd.

"Shoot, shoot! Shoot until it is dead!!"

"I won't die that easily."

Different from Selestinna's arrows, the arrows they were shooting only held ordinary demon banning power. Defending against only the ones that seemed they would hit a vital point, she ignored the rest of the arrows. It seemed some

arrows had hit her horse, but she didn't have the time to care about that. All she did was keep charging at full power. The distance between her and the group of archers was rapidly closing up. Riku felt like the rate the arrows were being shot increased, but it was still within her expectations.

“S-stop shooting! Switch over to your swords!”

Thinking Riku was already too close, the spiritualist ordered. If the distance was any closer than that, they would start having friendly-fire problems. But by the time the spiritualists were ordered that, it had already been too late. By the time he uttered his last word, Riku had already reached right in front of their faces. Humming through the wind, the halberd cut the archers to pieces. Once she got there, the conclusion was decided in a instant. *2Riku was slaughtering one after another, driving the archers to annihilation.

There were some spiritualists that barely managed to throw away their bows and wield their sword. But even so, the result didn't change. Her halberd would mow down everyone without mercy. There were some that were aiming for her horse rather than her, but before they would get close enough, they would already have been cut in two.

The Myuuz territory was drowning in a rain of blood. Aiming at the last remaining spiritualist, right when she was about to raise her halberd...

“Stop it there, red haired demon!”

A voice came from behind Riku.*3 After killing the last spiritualist, she slowly turned to the direction of the voice. Right there was the figure of Selestinna, who should have already ran away. Together with her, there was an old soldier that felt somewhat familiar to Riku.

“You really came here to get yourself killed, Selestinna Bistolru.”

“Came here to get yourself killed? It’s wrong. I came here to get revenge for my comrades that you killed.”

Selestinna readied her sword. Maybe because she got her sword back, any signs of uneasiness she had before faded away. Surprised, Riku shrugged her shoulders.

“Can it be that you thought just because you have a weapon, you could win?”

“Haaaaa!!”

Raising her voice, she charged at Riku. Whether it was the anger of having her comrades killed, the anger of letting Gortoberuk run away or the anger of being underestimated, or even all of those mixed together, it was unknown. The silver sword violently descended upon Riku.

“Such short-sighted attack.”

With her halberd, she kept defending her seemingly roaring swordplay. Sometimes she would parry, sometimes dodge. From each time she did that, gradually Selestinna started becoming even more enraged.

“You, how dare you!”

Being controlled by her own anger, her blows were more powerful. But, in contrast, she started to do wider movements. Riku didn’t overlook that. By the time the flaws in her swordplay were starting to become obvious, Riku had already seen through it.

“Yes, and with that, it’s over.”

The moment Selestinna had lost her breath, using the power of her whole body, Riku brushed Selestinna’s sword away. With the same level of strength that Gortoberuk had used to take her sword away from her hand previously, there was no way for her to withstand that blow. With a dim sound, her sword flew away to the air.

“Eh...?”

“There isn’t enough anger. To be more accurate, there isn’t anger imbued on your sword.”

Riku calmly caught the falling sword. The silver sword was just like before, she didn’t have any bolts left in her quiver. There weren’t any allies to save her. Even the old soldier that had been there all the time didn’t show any signs of moving to help her. This time, her destiny was set.

“Goodbye, Selestinna Bistolru.”

“N,no... Help me...”

To who she was directing those words, in fact nobody knew. After what was to happen, she wouldn’t be able to finish her words.

“Unfortunately, help isn’t coming.”

With the silver sword, Riku cut her head off.*4 Because of the fear of death, Selestinna Bistolru died with her eyes still open. Stabbing the head that fell to the ground with the sword, she was about to leave the place. She didn’t have any business remaining with this battle after all. All she had to do now was just complete Gortoberuk’s task by going back to the fort.

But...

“Wait!”

A somewhat familiar voice came from behind. It was the old soldier that came together with Selestinna. The spear wielding old soldier was looking at Riku as if to confirm something. Except for him, there were no spiritualists in the surroundings remaining. Before, Riku had wondered whether he was her attendant or something, but thinking how he didn’t save her from dying, it seemed he was something else in the end. While she was thinking about who the old soldier in front of her was, he calmly took off his helmet.

“It has been a long time, Riku Barusak ojou... Or rather, Riku, the traitor.”*5

Riku then noticed the old soldier's true identity.

And then, she remembered. The ones that attacked the Myuuz castle weren't only spiritualists from the Bistolru family.

“Toudo Barusak. To think you would be here.”

The old soldier was a spiritualist that served the Barusak household for many years. The forgotten memories from ten years ago were rapidly coming back. Toudo used to pass by the Barusak residence often times. But other than that, she didn't remember anything else noteworthy. At most, all she knew was that he made his name through many wars.

“The Bistolru head had said about a red haired demon appearing before. Thinking about the coincidence, I came here to confirm, but... Are you really planning on paying back your father's benevolence with this?”

“Benevolence? There was no such thing.”

While leaning her halberd on her shoulder, she started thinking. She was able to handle the halberd with only one hand easily, but she had the feeling that fighting Toudo with only one hand would be hard. If she was to fight him, she would rather use both hands, but she couldn't just throw away Selestinna's head.

“The benevolence of how he had been raising you for the entirety of seven years and the gratitude for sparing you too. It's very deplorable...”

“Deplorable?”

But she didn't have the option of running away. With this Barusak senile old man spouting nonsense, she needed to end his life already.

“Even though he dropped his own daughter from the cliff?”

“Ah, it couldn’t be helped back then. But it seems we ended up creating a mad dog instead. Very well, this Toudo will dispose of this disgrace of the Barusak.”

Toudo sighted. With his face full of wrinkles twisting, he pointed his spear directly to Riku’s direction. Riku also pointed her halberd to Toudo.

“That’s just perfect. I will make you end up just like her.”

On Riku’s face, her expression was turning into one with an unnatural complexion of ecstasy.

1. 腕を抱えたまま、ただ茫然と見つめているだけだった。Single arm arm crossing. MLG level that is too pro for anybody in the world.
2. 一度崩れてしまえば、あっという間だった。No idea what exactly that is supposed to mean. But, whatever it is, it is clear that part of the message was that all ended in an instant.
3. 震える声が、リクの背中を貫いた。It says that the voice is trembling, but it just doesn’t make sense in the context nor by the words she used, and much more with that ! . I really would like to hear somebody say something loud with a trembling voice! -.-
4. リクは、銀の剣で彼女の首を断った。The verb used is to deny, refuse, etc... I couldn’t find anything that made that line make sense... Whether it was miswritten or just some random expression I don’t know... At least without doubt Selestinna is dead, and since Riku needs to bring her head to the moustache guy, it’s obvious that she needs to cut her head off. Now, whether it is some special way of cutting, it is unknown... Well, everybody knows that winning the round with a special move is something else entirely and must not

be compared though.

5. Actually, goreijou is used instead of ojou. Reijou isn't used that much often, so many people wouldn't understand, but it means the same, so who cares, right? ^^

Chapter 17

Waltz of the Traitor and the General

Riku's fight against Toudo was very back and forth.

Both weapons were cutting through the air, clashing against each other. When Riku's halberd seemed to be about to reach Toudo, his spear would defend the blow. And when Toudo would thrust at her with his spear, she would parry it. Without either the halberd and the spear stopping to move, both kept earnestly exchanging their techniques. Unfortunately, the situation was a bit unfavorable to Riku.

"What's the matter, traitor? Your breathing seems to be getting rough."

Toudo blurted out these words to provoke Riku. But Riku couldn't deny them. There were three reasons for her to be in disadvantage.

First, for the past two days, she hadn't slept.

After she gained control of the fort, even if she was sleepy, there was no way she could have gone sleep. She took one night to send the present, and by the time she was able to get to the fort, it was already about to become nightfall. During that, she climbed up a mountain, got rid of the spiritualists and without being able to rest for too long, she was already going to battle. With all that, saying that she wasn't tired would be a lie.

The next one would be that she couldn't use one of her hands.

With her right hand, she was carrying her spoil of war. Obviously, more than using a halberd with one hand, a blow would have more power when using it with both hands. She

wanted to put it down somewhere, but here it was the battlefield. There was nowhere to put it down. Normally, she would throw the head into a sack, but because she was in hurry to depart, she ended up forgetting about bringing it.*1

And at last, it was the horse.

This horse that had been stolen from the spiritualists did hang on really well through the battlefield.*2 Because of that, it was possible that it was actually one of good breed. But even so, the horse had received fatal wounds. He had received the arrows rain the Bistolru spiritualists had shot onto them. Having been hit at the head and at the sides, he was bleeding out from several places. Even if it ended up collapsing at some point, it wouldn't be strange.

“You will be able to keep barking only for now.”

So she had said, but it being almost like a bluff, Riku was considerably being cornered by him.

The more she were to prolong this battle, more would it be disadvantageous to her. In order to finishing it up already, it would be best for her to throw away her war spoils and use both of her hands. But if she were to do that, it would go against Gortoberuk's orders. If she were to bring him discontentment, it would lower Leivein's reputation since he had given his recommendation on her. This was something she definitely needed to avoid.

“I give these same words back to you.”

Touido came with a spear thrust. While parrying one attack after another, she was desperately forcing her brain to work. Touido was very calm, after all, in his spear, there weren't any really out of ordinary power infused on it. An spiritualist that had made his name as much as Touido, would definitely be very powerful and his techniques would be very well polished. Since he wasn't showing this much power, it was obvious that

he was just playing around with Riku. As she clicked her tongue, she swung her halberd up, but her blow was defended by Toudo.

“Your aim is faltering. Are you getting tired?”

“No, I’m just fine.”

Riku’s halberd just like that gorged itself onto the side of Toudo’s horse. While raising a loud shriek, its organs were spilled out of his body. And with that, it slowly started to lose its speed. The lights of the horse’s eyes were gradually fading away. Until the horse completely stopped breathing and crumbled down, it was only a question of time. After that, all she needed to do was to aim for the moment Toudo would fall down from his horse.

“I see, you were aiming for my mobility from the start.”

Toudo gave a baleful look to Riku. But that was all he could do. Even though the situation of the battle started to incline towards Riku, Toudo was for some reason able to calm down. Perhaps it came from his experience from many wars.

“But you know, this is my most cherished horse. There is no way it will die in a place like this!!”

After he rebuked Riku, light started to come back to the horse’s eyes. Once again putting strength in its legs, it regained its speed. It actually looked like it had become even faster than before. It wasn’t like he got his wounds healed up. Rather, a greater amount of blood was flowing out of his wounds. Being out of her character, Riku ended up opening her eyes wide at the scene.

“Didn’t you know? Really good horses will always answer to its rider’s demands... Even if exchanging its life for it is necessary.”

Even costing its own life, it would respond to its owner’s

orders.

With his words, Riku ended up making a gap in her guard. Toudo wasn't an old general that would let this chance slip by.

"It's the end, traitor."

Toudo's spear hit her horse. While shrieking, the horse reared with its two legs. She started to slip down from her horse. Like that, she felt she started falling down from her horse. Whether it was all good luck, without Toudo being able to deal a deep wound, the horse regained its posture and kept running. But... What would be following after that was unknown.

If she ended up falling from her horse, there would be no way for her to win. Riku clicked her tongue.

"...It can't be helped."

Riku made her resolve.

Throwing away the sword she was holding with her left hand, she held the halberd with both hands. Her precious war spoil was still skewered at the sword, but she could go pick it up later. In that place, there was only Toudo and herself. She didn't need to worry about somebody snatching her prize from her. With that, she was able to calm down.

"Go die, Toudo. Shriek like a pig."

With both of her hands, Riku swung her halberd. Toudo prepared his spear to defend from the blade that had an increased speed. But this time, the tranquility finally vanished from his face. Because of the very heavy attack, Toudo couldn't block it well. Receiving the blow, his arm made a very familiar sound. It was enough to make one think that the attacks from before were only a breeze.

"G,ghn!" (ぐ、ぐぬゝ！)

“No, that’s not how it is.”

The more Riku swung her halberd, the more heavier would her next attack be. Toudo desperately tried to fight back, but. In contrast to Riku being able to recover her breathing, Toudo’s breathing was starting to falter. And at that moment, Toudo started a demon banning technique.

“Obediently die like a little bug at once.”*3

Time had suddenly become slow to him. The experienced general Toudo had activated his technique at a bad timing.

Her descending halberd, while raising a bizarre sound, fell down onto Toudo’s head. He hadn’t been able to compete with that speed and power. With his spear being snapped into two pieces, his helmetless head split open. Beautifully split from his head to his torso, Toudo Barusak fell down from his horse.

“Even though I was looking forward to corner him just like he had done to me... I guess I lacked the ability.”

Getting down from her horse, Riku took half of Toudo’s head. It was somewhat disgusting, but by bringing it back, she could prove that she had defeated the veteran general. Taking away the head off the sword, in its place, she stuck Toudo’s head instead. Grasping Selestinna’s hair, she calmly went back to her horse. But her horse had already reached its limits.

“I see, this child died.”

That horse had died while still standing. While still bleeding, it stood motionless in that position. At one glance it seemed to be alive, but it wasn’t breathing anymore. While gently brushing the dead horse, she sighed. She couldn’t use Toudo’s horse. Thinking about going back to the fort on foot, she felt a bit depressed, but without being able to think about any way to get her hands on a horse, there was no way out other than walking. And right at the moment she pointed her foot to the direction of the fort...

“I finally found you, first lieutenant Riku Barusak!!”

From the direction of the fort, she saw somebody coming.

It was sergeant major Roppu Nezaarand. With his long rabbit ears fluttering with the wind, he came on his horse.

“What’s the matter, sergeant major Roppu Nezaarand?”

“Because you were too late, lieutenant general Gortoberuk told me to pick you up... Hey, isn’t that Selestinna from the Bistolru and Toudo from the Barusak!? You managed to defeat them?”

Roppu immediately leaned forward by the surprise. Surprised, he alternately looked at both heads.

“That’s right. But, I will end it here. I’m tired, and my horse became useless.”

“Ah, if that’s the case, then please use this horse. Even on foot, I can still keep up the pace well enough.”

Getting down from the horse, he gave his place for Riku to ride on.

Mounting on the horse, she looked back once more to Toudo’s dead body. Once again, she started to think on how he was someone that had the surname of Barusak, but as expected she didn’t feel anything.

“First lieutenant, let’s go back quickly. Sooner or later, spiritualists looking for Toudo will come.”

“...You are right. Let’s go back to the fort.”

Riku rode her horse to the fort.

And the girl dyed in red, with her hair of the same red color fluttering with the wind, she disappeared in the darkness of the night.

With that, the Myuuz castle battle came to an end with both

sides having very big losses.

The main cause of the defeat for the demon side was because of their failed night-attack.

And more, with the reinforcements that should have come from the castle being brutally intercepted without even having the chance to fight back, the staff officer was killed. As the result, the Myuuz castle was burnt down and Gortoberuk's adjutant perished as well. Gortoberuk himself also lost his dominant arm and his longsword, and Gortoberuk's division of the third army became crumbled.

But there weren't only bad things. Because first lieutenant Riku Barusak recaptured the fort, the spiritualists were successfully locked up inside the Myuuz castle. The winners from the battle were the spiritualists, but they became isolated. The mountains surrounding Myuuz weren't a place humans would be able to go through without a guide.

Adding to that, their side lost two exceptional commanders. Furthermore, one was the head of one of the families in the field while the other was a veteran general serving the other family.

If looking only at the fact the spiritualists captured the Myuuz castle, it would be said that it was their win.

But if one were to look at how they lost two exceptional commanders and were locked in the Myuuz castle, it was the demon's victory.

After that, when both armies would confront each other... To what conclusion all this would result.

That, nobody knew yet.

-
1. 普段であれば、そこら辺の袋に放り込むのだが、急いで駆け付けたので袋を忘れてきてしまっていた。It says ->そこら辺<-, which means

surroundings, *etc.* But what would this mean in this situation? Would it mean that the sack would be left in the ground somewhere? Or maybe it actually has another meaning to it? I didn't find anything of the sorts though.

2. 退魔師から奪ってきた馬は、良く戦場をかけてくれた。I don't know which ->かけて<-this one is supposed to be since it doesn't show which kanji it is. There are many "kakeru"s, and it is difficult to know really what it was supposed to mean. None of those that I found did much sense to the context. The one that has the most probability of being the one used is the one that means to run, meaning like the horse has been running through the battlefield, being that the job he was supposed to be doing, and he had done it really well or so. In this case, in english, it would be better to write like the way I had written here instead of literally putting that he had been running really well... Either way, as far as the context goes, even if it a different "kakeru", the meaning should be very similar to what I had written.
3. 「塵虫らしく何も言わずに、さっさと死ね」No idea what ->塵虫<- means.

Chapter 18

Rook Barusak

Rook Barusak was reclining on his chair.

Sorting out the stockpiled documents, he gave out an exhausted breath. The maid Mary, who was always next to him attending to his necessities, had gone out to the market , so she wasn't here today. For the first time in a while, Rook was able to enjoy his time alone.

“Now that I think about it, I'm already fourteen years old.”

While overhearing a tumult happening at the main street, he suddenly got nostalgic.

Rook carried his previous life's memories. Somehow passing for the university exam, he drank to the point of being bathed in alcohol, so he didn't have memories on these last moments. That's why at first, he thought he was dreaming a dream he had become a baby, but without showing any signs of waking up, he grew up. After one year, he was able to get used to all that and accept that he reincarnated in a game world.

“Uhh, what was the next event?”

Rook extended his hand to the table's drawer.

Removing the padlock, he took out some old papers. On them, there were words written in Japanese. From the moment he became able to hold a pen, he wrote down all the events that were going to happen. For the residents of this world, it was like the future itself was written in there, but because it was written in Japanese, nobody would be able to read it. In fact, the servants thought they were only scribbles.

“Ah, that's right, it was that. This one is the most important

event, so I need to properly do the arrangements. But before that, there is Seles-chan's confession event, right?"

Rook let out a broad smile. It was the heroine that had the air of an important figure, his childhood friend Seles. It wasn't to the point of being his favorite in his previous world, but it was close.*1

"I can't wait..."

...Rather, it's not time to be daydreaming. I need to start the preparations for the next event, or the world will truly be destroyed."

Putting away the papers, he gave out a long sigh. In case this event ends up in failure, regardless of which route he were to choose, it would lead to a bad end. The route Rook chose was the one that he would capture as many girls as he could; it was the harem end, but depending on this next event, all this would crumble down. Now showing a serious face, he started the arrangements related to the next and most important event. But there was someone that kept hindering him.

"Ro-Rook! It's terrible!"

Without even knocking the door, a small shadow came running. It was Rebecca, a young girl that was being hunted by slave hunters at this city Rook had come to. After saving her without difficulties, it became that he would be taking care of her until she was able to live on her own. But actually... There was a route that she would be together with Rook for her whole life, and this one was the route Rook was aiming to advance through.

"What's the matter, Rebecca. For you to be in such hurry..."

"Selestinna-san, she... She was!"

Speaking while sobbing, she came to Rook and hugged him. When she came running, her wheat braids came a bit loose. As

Rook was hugging her small body, he frowned. In the game, there shouldn't have been scene where Selestinna would get into trouble at this stage.

"But, but... I don't want to believe it, but..."

"Rebecca, calm down. There is no way Seles would lose that easily."

While Rebecca was still talking, this time, Mary came rushing into the room. Mary's face was unnaturally very pale. While cuddling Rebecca, he became perplexed by the development that didn't happen in the game.

"What's the matter, Mary?"

"It's very important, Rook-sama. Selestinna-sama and Toudo-sama, who were participating at the capturing of the Myuuz castle, have both perished."

"Wh-what did you say!?"

The impact was as if he had been hit with a metal rod with full force. The route in which Selestinna died indeed existed. However, it wasn't at this timing, but only after the story had developed more. Rook unsteadily sat down on his chair.

"This you are talking about, are you really certain about it?"

"But, we even saw the coffin."

While saying that, with her eyes wide open, Rebecca had a great amount of tears flowing down from her eyes. Leaning his elbows on the table, he put his hands on his head. This development didn't exist in the game. As if inflicting the finishing blow, Mary continued with her words.

"It seems the demons even had stolen her sword... All we were to recover was her battered body."*2

"How...could it be?"

Rook was trembling. Because of his sorrow over Selestinna's

death and his anger over this unreasonable situation, he couldn't stop trembling. Being worried about Rook's condition, Rebecca cuddled close to him.

“Rook... Are you crying? Will you go after revenge?”

Revenge.

While nodding to Rebecca's words, he firmly held himself back. He certainly wanted to get revenge. The cute Selestinna that had that tsun*3 and imposing personality, and from time to time would show an embarrassed smile; for the demons who made her die, he wanted to make them suffer twofold.

But right now there was something more important than that.

“Thank you Rebecca. And also, Mary... Can you two leave me alone for a little?”

“But...”

“Please.”

As Rook muttered that word in a depressed tone, the two of them both looked at each other with a pained expression. Rebecca kept standing there as if she still had something to say, but she had her back pushed by Mary with her head hanging down.

“Understood... If you'll excuse us, Rook-sama. Now, Rebecca, let's go.”

“Yes... If Rook says so...”

And then, still showing signs of hesitation, they left the room. Still in his room, Rook was once again alone. The ambiance of the room that now had become silent was quickly becoming heavy. As if to break away from this heaviness, Rook raised his voice.

“Why, why did Seles-chan... Was it because I did actions

differently from the game? Now, what am I supposed to do now! Without Selestinna, what do I do about the next event!!”

Rook’s voice was resounding, full of grief.

Rook was self-aware that he had strayed a little too much from the game main character’s actions. Administering his territory that even had his long gone elder sister Riku’s part added to it day and night, the soldiers and the people gained prosperity. Because of that, he ended up meeting some heroines at timings differently from what they were supposed to be. He wondered if Selestinna’s death was also because of his actions. Of course, while there were differences on when he had met the heroines, the situations remained very similar to the game. That’s why he couldn’t have imagined that by these actions, he would trigger Selestinna’s death.

“If I don’t investigate where things went wrong... No, before that... Yes, it alright. After I get through the next event, I can deal with that. At that time, I will be able to more or less guess who was the demon that killed Seles-chan.”

Bit by bit he regained his calm composure. After he deeply breathed three times, Rook took out his papers. And then, he drew two lines over where it was written [Seles-chan confession event].*4

“I’m sorry. I promise... That I will definitely get revenge for you.”

Rook shifted his eyes to the next event.

What was written down there was:[Contact event ①]. Relying on what his next steps were going to be, the bad ending was approaching moment by moment. Selestinna was a character that was required for that event. He would be meeting a character during his date with Selestinna, but because the essential Selestinna was now gone, he had no choice but to choose somebody else. But he could only wonder which

heroine he should use in Selestinna's place. While thinking all this, a man that had black wings landed behind Rook, who still had his hands on his head, without making any sound.

After looking at Rook's writhing back with interest for some time, the shinigami whispered in a small voice.

"I guess it is still not time."

He said.

The moment the shinigami had whispered, Rook suddenly felt a chill. Putting the papers down, he immediately turned his head back, but there was nobody there. Only, on the complicatedly manufactured carpet there were many black feathers left behind. It was as if there had been a crow or something around there a few moments ago.

"It's only my imagination, I guess?"

While holding a black feather, Rook muttered with mixed feelings.*5

He still didn't know. He didn't know that the one who killed his beloved Selestinna was actually his sister.

-
1. 武闘派ヒロインの一角であり、幼馴染のセレスは、前世のお気に入り.....とまではいかないが、それに準ずるキャラだった。I don't know well what ->準ずる <- would mean in this context...
 2. 「魔族が彼女の剣まで盗んでいった模様でして.....戻ってきたのは胴体だけでした」Here it would be that they were only able to recover the headless body, being ->胴体<- all below the neck. But for his maid to be telling him that all they recovered her headless body is kind of... It was only possible in Japanese because that word used has more of a meaning-only feeling instead of being scary like that.
 3. Tsun from tsun tsun. It is also the same tsun from tsundere.

4. I'm not sure what is, but as far as I am concerned, it is something related to there being two lines...
5. I'm not sure if wouldポツリと mean that in that context, but it should be about it.

Chapter 19

Suspicion

At the Myuuz castle, many cheers were being raised.

Because the spiritualists burned down the castle, they lost the food supplies there. Adding to that, losing two capable generals and being under a situation where calling for reinforcements was difficult, it was very obvious that their morale declined. Because Gortoberuk's third army had received reinforcements and now was with numbers greater than the double they had had at the start, there was no way for the spiritualists to have survived from the demon side's attack. The castle once again had the Demon Lord army flag fluttering at its top and within its scorched insides, many spiritualists' worthless corpses piled up.

The one with the most achievements at this battle was the first lieutenant Riku Barusak. She had recaptured the fort, which had become their base now. And not only that, she also killed two of the enemy generals. But even so, the figure of that red haired girl was nowhere to be found. The reason why she hadn't participated in this last fight was a very simple one. It was because right now she...

"I've said this many times already, didn't I? I didn't betray you."

"I don't need excuses. Just tell the truth."

It was because right now she was confined in the interrogation room.

The beginning of all that happened one day ago.

Since she had gone back together with Roppu, during all these days, she had always been training. Without being

summoned by Gortoberuk, together with Vrusto and her other subordinates, from morning to evening, they had been training without stopping.

But at that night... An incident had occurred.

At that night which everyone was sleeping, a sentry had spotted suspicious shadows.

There was no way he could have ignored a group sneakily passing through the mountains. Some of the spiritualists, who were carrying some sort of coffin, were able to escape, but even so, they were able to capture most of them. When they noticed they couldn't fight back anymore, they killed themselves, but the few people that thought losing their life would be too unfortunate blurted out all the information in detail. And so, because of it, Riku was thrown to the interrogation room.

“Just because these guys were spiritualists from the Barusak, this is simply jumping to conclusions.”

Riku was bit by bit becoming unable to hide her irritation. Since last night, the situation didn't make any progress. As she gave a deep sigh, she glared at the hateful interrogator.

“In first place, whether it is about that night attack or anything else, there would be no way for me to know. It must be another person.”

She didn't know how many times had it been, but once again, she repeated the explanation to the interrogator. Logically thinking, at most, the fact Riku wasn't the traitor should have been clear. But like he had always done, once again he shook his head. He also had his reasons to suspect Riku.

“But from the information we've gathered from them, they said that they had been guided through the forest by a female demon soldier that had a small stature.”

The interrogator also started to become unable to hide his irritation. The sound of him hitting the table was much louder when compared to the first time he did that.

“There are people other than me if it is to the extent of being a female soldier! And besides, didn’t the people you caught forget the color of her hair. Something like that is impossible. For them to not remember my hair color.”

With her finger, Riku was playing with her hair. She couldn’t imagine there being people that would forget about her red hair, which would stand out even with darkness of the night.

“It seems that the traitor was using a helmet. They simply didn’t see the hair. Now, just confess already!”

“As I said... There is nothing to confess, nor anything else; I’m completely unrelated!”

Riku hit the table with all her strength. Because she didn’t hold herself back on her anger when she hit the tablet, it broke down while raising a loud sound. The object similar to a cup that was on the table fell to the floor and broke into pieces. Because of that, water spilled over Riku’s and the interrogator’s feet, forming a puddle of water, but both didn’t care about that. They were both giving out sparks to each other. If they were allowed to bring weapons in, then maybe they would have already started fighting. It was just how much full of tension the interrogation room was.

“If you don’t intend on telling the truth, then I can still ask your body directly, you know?”

“Torture? Even if you go torture an innocent person, you won’t find the true culprit, didn’t you know?”

“You have quite the self-confidence in your statement there.”

“I didn’t do anything after all. Rather, if I were to find any Barusak, I would be the one torturing them.”

Riku said with a calm expression. In fact, she wanted to torture Toudo before, but because of her lack of ability, she didn't get the chance to. She needed to get stronger to the point she could go easy on others next time. That's why she wanted to immediately go back training. Even so, Riku didn't seem like she was going to try run away from the interrogation room. In fact, all she was thinking was how and in what way she should be cornering her enemies.

The situation was completely not progressing. And right at the time the interrogator started to think about actually torturing her, the door of the interrogation room opened and the figure of a man appeared. As this man who had a magnificent mustache cleared his throat, the tension that could explode at any moment calmed down a bit. The interrogator, who had been coming closer to Riku before, gave one step back and saluted the man.

"Thanks for the hard work, your Excellency, lieutenant general Gortoberuk."(お疲れ様です)

"Umu, good job doing the interrogation. Sorry, but could you let the two of us talk alone?"(うむ)

The interrogator became overturned by Gortoberuk's request. There was no way he could allow the general of his own army and a suspect of treason talk together alone. To express his objection, he was about to open his mouth, but Gortoberuk stopped him by giving a sign with his hand.

"If she wanted to cause me harm, she would have shown her true colors at the battle. That's right... When the noon bell rings, come to my room. Do you understand?"

"...Ha, understood."(はっ)

Glaring intensively at Riku, he left the room.

"...I wanted to ask once, but why did you not throw the name Barusak away?"

Sitting down in the chair, Gortoberuk calmly asked. Looking at Gortoberuk's eyes, without much anxiety, she answered him.

"If I were to change the surname of Barusak to another one, when another turmoil just like this one happens, people would start being suspicious."

In the end, if she were to change her surname, people would suspect whether she was just trying to hide her origin. If that was what was going to happen, it is more convenient for her to just call herself Barusak. Hearing Riku's answer, Gortoberuk nodded.

"Names are very bothersome. Because of your surname and your race, your accomplishments end up overshadowed."

Gortoberuk indifferently told her that. It made one wonder where his usual himself full of might disappeared to. Perhaps at the time he had lost his dominant hand, he had left that behind together with his arm. As she was thinking about that, Gortoberuk suddenly started talking again.

"By all your achievements, your promotion has been decided. From now on, you can call yourself captain Riku Barusak."

"Yes, understood."

"Umu, your next duty has been assigned. You will leave the fort and start working as a bodyguard for the Demon Lord's imouto-sama."(imouto=younger sister)

"Bodyguard, you say?"

Charlotte, who was the Demon Lord's little sister should have had her own exclusive bodyguard corps. Something such as disregarding them and needing to have Riku as bodyguard couldn't be thought as something natural. Seeing Riku being perplexed, Gortoberuk gave a faint smile.

"Charlotte-sama will be secretly going on a trip. But if she

were to be always surrounded by stern-faced guards, she wouldn't be able to enjoy her long awaited trip. That's why it was requested of you, who are a young girl, to work as her bodyguard. What? I've heard that the place you will be going to is very safe. You just need to accompany her from a certain distance and prepare for unprecedented situations. Therefore, unless by some chance any danger approaches Charlotte-sama, it's fine if you don't do anything in particular."

"Then basically... It's fine if I just stay next to Charlotte-sama at all the times. That's what you are saying?"

"That's right."

In other words, all of this was in reality nothing more than a vacation.

Being suspected of being a traitor, it would be hard for Riku to keep living in the fort. Until all this commotion cools down, she should go rest somewhere else, or so would be the case. With all that said, Riku saluted Gortoberuk.

"Thank you very much, lieutenant general Gortoberuk."

"I will be personally looking for the real traitor. ...From now on, I will be looking forward to your performance... Immediately start the preparations for the trip."

"Yes, understood."

After she lowered her head to Gortoberuk, she was about to leave the room.

But from Gortoberuk's expression, it felt like he still had something to say. She was a bit uncertain if she should ask him what it was about, but since he had told her to go start the preparations for her next task, she decided it was better for her to leave the room once and for all. Lowering her head one more time, she left the interrogation room.

Inside the interrogation room, only Gortoberuk alone

remained. He looked at the place his right arm used to be. Regretfully touching the part where it was cut off, he muttered to himself in a small voice nobody would have heard.

“...Perhaps, I will need to pass the seat to the junior generation soon.”

He said.

The old general shut his eyes. Under his eyelids, the image of Riku swinging her halberd full of power was being reflected.

1. 「もし、ワシに害を及ぼすならば戦場で犯意を翻すだろうよ。そうよな.....昼の鐘がなる頃になってもワシが出てこない時は、部屋に入ってこい。それで良いだろう」
Too much bundled up of an explanation for english... The real meaning would be: When the afternoon bell rings and even so I don't come out (come out to outside? From his room? Dunno...), come to my room.

Arc III

Derufoi Festival Nightmare

Chapter 20

The Festival at Derufoi

The Derufoi city was a city overflowing with liveliness.

Despite the cold weather that seemed it would start snowing, the main street was crowded with people. And what's more, each person walking there was showing a smile. Whether it was the street stalls or shop windows, all was brilliantly decorated. The merchants using varied colorful masks and mantles would raise their voices, full of energy. As Riku looked at her surroundings with deep emotions, the little girl walking beside her let out a smile.

"It's your first time being to this kind of place, isn't it?"

With her face buried in her muffler, the girl whispered to Riku.

In reaction to the girl's question, Riku showed a wry smile. In these ten years, whether it was training or going to war, all she had been doing was only either of those things. Even before that, she wouldn't really leave the Barusak residence. She remembered participating in the festival promoted by the royal capital, although to Riku, it was a memory she didn't like.

"That is true... I've never been to places of this kind too much."

"What, captain, you are wasting your life. Listen, from now on, I will teach you how to have fun."

Saying that, the girl pulled Riku's hand. The girl advanced through the crowd of people as if she was already used to doing that. As the girl was walking, her blonde hair that was tied in twin-tails would be moving left and right at her back. At one glance, it felt she was a bit like an ojou-sama from some

rich family, but the girl wasn't just an ordinary ojou-sama. While holding her hat that felt like it was falling off her head, Riku whispered next to the girl's ears.

“Um...Is it fine for Charlotte-sama to not use a hat?”

Her two magnificent horns located a bit above her ears were like they were a hair ornament, but they were clearly real horns and could be argued they were inhuman. After Riku asked her that, Charlotte gave a mischievous smile.

“Look your surroundings with more attention, captain. At this town, there is nobody worrying about my horns. After all, the day after tomorrow is the festival.”

“Festival, you say?”

“That's right. It's a costume festival! Look, there are also other people already hasty for the festival.”

Charlotte's thin finger pointed straight to a crowd of people. Looking where the finger was pointing at, it was possible to see there was a boy wearing a headdress of a cow and a girl wearing fox gloves playing with each other. It was possible to see other people also wearing costumes now and then. Most likely, Charlotte's horns were being mistook for it being only a costume.

“I see... That's why you chose to come to this town?”

“Although there are other reasons as well. Hey, let's go.”

Charlotte went running full of energy straight to a shop stall. No matter how one would think, her appearance was only of a normal girl. While wondering if she was really born more than two hundred years ago, Riku followed after her. Looking behind, it was possible to immediately see that there was a group that was following them and was checking their situation at the back-alley. All of them were wearing the same long hood and were armed with swords. It was most likely

Charlotte's personal escorts Gortoberuk previously talked about. They looked almost like a group of kidnappers. Thinking about that, a memory she didn't really want to remember surfaced in her mind. Trying to take those memories out of her mind, Riku averted her eyes from them.

"Captain, what are you taking so long for? Come quickly!"

"Yes, Charlotte-sama."

One by one, Charlotte was checking the stalls; she was happily looking around at the festival.

While chewing a bird skewer that had Tare sauce*1 on it, she picked up a pendant she got interested in, which was made of gems that were visibly cheap and had parts coated in gold. Naturally, to her, who would actually use real ones,*2 there was no way she would buy it, and actually went there only to make fun of the shop.

"It's fine for you to buy what you want. However, I will subtract the payment from your wages."

So said Charlotte, but there was nothing she particularly wanted to buy. She thought of buying a souvenir to Leivein, but she didn't think there would be anything he would be happy to receive from those shops.

"That's right. If there are weapons or the sort, it might be good to check it out..."

"Haa... Captain, you should forget about things related to war for the moment. Otherwise, there would be no meaning for you to not have brought your weapon here."

With Charlotte's response that was accompanied with a sigh, Riku showed a wry smile.

The halberd she had been long using was left at an inn far from the city. Even if the city was crowded with people using costumes, a girl wielding a halberd would be too much

suspicious. Therefore, right now, Riku was only wearing clothes a normal girl at a town would. If danger came towards Charlotte, all she needed to do was to defend her with her bare hands. The demon banning arts didn't have effect on Riku, and if she were to buy enough time, the escorts that are tailing after them would do something.

“Understood, Charlotte-sama.”

Sounds of different timbres were resounding throughout the town. Before the festival, the town was this much lively already, but when the actual festival starts, it should liven up even more. Putting her hands that seemed to be becoming numb by the cold in her pocket, she walked next to Charlotte, somewhat behind. And then, putting off finding something suitable to Leivein to tomorrow, she started to consider buying souvenirs for Vrusto and her other subordinates.

“Hm! Captain, look at that!!”(むっ)

Charlotte stopped in front of one of the stalls.

It was a shoot the target game. There were many prizes being laid there, and in front of them, at the counter, there was a short bow. *3Charlotte had her eyes glued at a cute teddy bear, which was one of the prizes. Absentmindedly gazing at the teddy bear, she looked like a girl in love. Riku became stunned. She was wondering if person that was now that restless over the stuffed toy was really the one leading the Demon Lord army.

“Oh, ojou-chans! Won't you come play shooting the target?*4 It's three copper coins each try.”

As the stallholder looked at Charlotte, his eyebrows loosened.

After thinking for a few seconds, she firmly pulled Riku's sleeve.

“Captain, It's an order. Shoot down that target.”

“...Isn’t it fine to just buy a teddy bear similar to that one?”

“It’s not! This is a fated encounter!! If it’s not that one, then it’s not the same!!”

“ ... ”

Too much surprised, Riku became unable to say anything.

She once again wondered whether that selfish girl really was the one leading the whole Demon Lord army. Flustered by such doubts, she held herself from putting them into words. If she were to pick ill intent now, Gortoberuk, who had recommended her... Didn’t really matter. But Leivein, who had recommended her to Gortoberuk, would get part of the bad reputation. She mustn’t let Leivein’s evaluation go down because of her.

“Hey, captain! Quickly, shoot it down!”

“...Yes.”

The target was small and seemed to be a bit hard to hit. Even with that said, it wasn’t that she didn’t have experience using a bow. By using three shots, she should be able to hit it. Riku leaned down and was about to get the bow.

But...

“The ojou-san there, could I go in your place?”

The bow her hand was about to hold was taken by someone beside her.

“Eh? Bu-but even if you get it, I won’t give it up to someone like you! That bear is mine!!”

“Yes, of course. I just wanted to give you a hand. Besides...”

The boy shot the arrow. Flying through the air, it hit the target right at the center.

“Oh, a great hit! It was very amazing, onii-chan. Here, take

it.”

The stallholder gave the teddy bear to the silver haired boy. Receiving the teddy bear, the boy gently gave it to Charlotte.

“Yes, it’s this one, right? The special teddy bear you wanted.”

“U, umu. I-I won’t say any thanks.”*5

Charlotte’s cheeks blushed.

Hugging the teddy bear, this time she had her eyes glued at the silver haired boy.

“Hm? Is there something in my face?”

“There is no such thing! Mo-more importantly, where did you learn how to use the bow like that? I saw you did it very skillfully.”

As she asked that, the silver haired boy hung his head down. From Riku’s angle, she couldn’t see the boy’s face, but she felt an unpleasant feeling spreading in her heart. Riku immediately took Charlotte’s hand and intended to leave this place, but Riku couldn’t move. As if the world had stopped, she couldn’t move from that place.

“Yes, I learned it from my childhood friend... She used to be much better than me.”

“Used to be, you say?”

Noticing his use of past tense, she inquired about this point within the reasonable limit. As if he was feeling hatred about something, the silver haired boy raised his face.

“Yes, she is... Already dead. At the Myuuz castle battle, she...”

A single tear fell from the boy’s eyes. Charlotte glanced at Riku for an instant. She was showing a face of someone that seemed to want to say something.

The possibilities were very limited on that crossbow girl

being his childhood friend. There were very high chances of Riku being the killer. Although there was somebody that had a connection to someone she had killed right in front of her eyes, she didn't feel anything in particular.

More than that, there were no doubts that this childhood friend of that archery expert who participated at the Myuuz battle had connections with the spiritualists. As Riku was winking, trying to make an eye signal, Charlotte opened her mouth.

“...Do you have resentments for that?”

“...I don't know. But I think it would be better for this miserable thing to end already.”

“Miserable?”

As if the message of Riku's winking did not reach her, Charlotte kept talking. Riku was preparing herself to kill that person who had connections with the spiritualists at any moment. She was only waiting for the order.

But Charlotte didn't show any signs she would be giving any orders.

“Yes. I think it's miserable how the spiritualists and demons fight, washing blood with blood.”

The boy was muttering his conviction. As if Charlotte had been captivated by it, she was attentively listening to his conversation. Riku suddenly got the feeling they should get away from here as soon as possible. Thinking this decision must be the correct one, she patted Charlotte's little shoulder.

“Charlotte-sama, soon we should...”

“Captain, I want to talk to this guy. Sorry, but can't you step aside?”

Riku was amazed by Charlotte's declaration. She wanted to

be together with that suspicious spiritualist alone. She didn't know what was going to happen to Charlotte from now on, but she had the responsibility of dealing with any unexpected incidents, and so, in turn, it would be Leivein's responsibility. From anything that could happen, only that she needed to avoid at any costs. Riku was desperately persisting.

“But, Charlotte-sama!

“How insistent! This is an order! If not, then what, captain..? What would you be scheming by defying my command?”

Charlotte was glaring at Riku. During that moment, the escorts that should have been following both of them from behind tried to hold her down. It was a great amount of strength being used at her, but it was still to the point of her to be able to easily shake it off.

“Let me go!”

Riku put strength into her arms. Shaking them off was easier than twisting the arm of a baby. However, when she was able to get free again, Charlotte's figure was already nowhere to be seen.

...She had already gone together with the silver haired boy she was talking to before.

-
1. I don't really know if it would be that, but I didn't find anything better that made sense.
 2. I think here, instead of ->見につけている<-, it was supposed to be ->身につけている<-
 3. It didn't say whether the bow truly was at a counter, but by the context looking at it in a Japanese perspective, it kind of gives an idea that it is on a counter. In English, you don't have as much freedom to go imagine stuff, so when you do stuff like that without putting the exact description, it just

feels weird although it is possible to have an idea what it is talking about. In Japanese, only by saying that the bow was in front of the prizes, it is still possible to imagine the counter.

4. What is the plural form of ojou-chan supposed to be...? Besides, how is that game supposed to be called? That->射的<-
5. I request the help of a sage of the highest caliber to solve this mystery; this grammar monster that shouldn't ever be seen. I say, master google is unwell and once again unable to respond to my call. As one of his many disciples, I can't do without his guidance, as you can see in this exceptional case. So, wtf is that?->礼を言ってやっても良いぞ<-

Names:

デルフォイの街: Derufoi city

Chapter 21

Sweet Coffee

Riku clicked her tongue.

Both Charlotte and the silver haired boy completely disappeared inside the crowd of people, making Riku lose her sight of them. But even so, there was no way they could have gone too far. If she go after them immediately, there is no mistake she will be able to find them in time. Riku started running after them in a hurry. Her instincts were telling that she mustn't let the two of them be together. It was clear that that boy had connections to the spiritualists, and Charlotte, who led the Demon Lord army, was a person of the highest importance. If Charlotte's identity was discovered, it wasn't possible to expect what would happen then.

But as if meaning Riku wouldn't be allowed to proceed, a escort kept standing in her way.

“Wait a second, what is all this about? Is it fine to leave the two of them alone?”

“Charlotte-sama must be thinking of something. Thinking much exalted thoughts that are unimaginable to us.”

The escort declared with a serious face. She got so angry over that declaration the blood in her head felt like it would start to boil. If she had her halberd at hands right now, perhaps she would have ended up cutting the escort's head off. Alleviating that increasing rage by having a long breath of air, she glared at the escort.

“Exalted thoughts? Right... Let's say it is just as you told me. If that's the case, then whatever happens with all that, it is none of my responsibility.”

Declaring that, she had the feeling she took a weight off her shoulders. Turning away from the escort, she decided to go back to the inn.

The only person that blocked her way was the single man standing there. The rest all followed after Charlotte. Since that was the case, her duty was over. She was now going to enjoy her vacation without needing to escort someone or do anything else. But stopping her, the escort caught her arm.

“...What?”

“It seems that you don’t understand Charlotte-sama’s plan. Since it can’t be helped, come with me for a bit.”

The escort pointed to a coffee shop nearby. It was a stone built coffee shop that had a very calming ambience. There was a sign which had the word [Open] and the menu written on it.

“Sorry, but I’m not in a mood for that.”

“Well then, Riku Barusak... What is your rank?”

“...Right now I’m a captain.”

“I’m a lieutenant colonel. It seems my rank is higher than yours. Come with me. That’s an order.”

She didn’t have any options.

With the same feeling as if the escort that proclaimed to be a lieutenant coronel himself was dragging Riku, she unwillingly entered the coffee shop. As if he was already familiar with it, the lieutenant coronel ordered two coffee cups and sat down in an empty seat. Inside, it was moderately filled with people, and had even some people wearing costumes having fun talking among them. But there was nobody that minded the costumes. Rather, the waitress herself was wearing cat ears and had false fangs, having fun with her own costume.

...If it was that coffee shop, maybe even if she didn’t wear her

hat, it would be fine. After she sat down on her chair, the lieutenant colonel cleared his throat.

“Umu, well then... Once again, let’s do self introductions. I am Keity Foster. From the first army, which is led by Charlotte-sama, I serve as the lieutenant coronel of the imperial guards. I would like to show my thanks to captain Riku Barusak for undertaking this task.”

Lieutenant colonel Keity Foster gave a bow with his head.

Riku ignored about half of what he said , but by what she heard, she suddenly had a bad presentiment. As expected, she hesitated to talk about it personally.

Lieutenant colonel Keity Foster was a demon that had muscles worthy of the position of being an escort. His arm was thick and covered in tiger fur, but even so, by looking at them, it was very well possible to notice he was getting tense. No matter which angle one would look at him, it was clear he was a man.

Noticing Riku’s confusion, Lieutenant colonel Keity Forstar gave a wry smile.

“Yes, you too got the wrong idea. With this appearance, it can’t be helped I get mistaken so often, but I’m a woman. Since I’ve been born for as long as I’ve been living, it has been like that. Really... Originally, in the Foster family, it’s very common for our physique to become like that. My mother, elders sister and little sister, all are often times called “macho women”. ... Well, although they bring hell to those people.”

Keity told her story as if she was already fed up by telling it many times. But such a thing didn’t really matter. It was common to have women like Riku serving as soldiers in the Demon Lord army. As long as one was able to get achievements, whether it was a man or a woman didn’t matter. Even with that in mind, because Keity kept talking, Riku wasn’t

able to get the opportunity to say anything.

“Did you know? Not long ago, I’ve been stopped from going to the women’s section of the bath. And also...”

“Thank you for waiting. Here is your coffee.”

As if to pour water onto Keity, who was tediously complaining about her problems of the disparity problems of her appearance, the waitress came with the coffee. The obsidian colored liquid was giving off steam. Finally, for the first time, Keity shut her mouth and started to blow her coffee to cool it down. In order to repress her gloomy mood, Riku did a long breath. And then, before Keity would start drinking the coffee, Riku hurriedly began to talk about the main question.

“Now... What kind of thoughts would Charlotte-sama be thinking?”

“Ah, yes. It was about that we came here to talk, wasn’t it.”

Apparently, Keity had forgotten about that somehow.

While scratching her head due to the embarrassment, she gave a quick look at the surroundings. And then, lowering her voice by one level, she started to talk.

“At the Derufoi city, there is an area that is prohibited for people to go in. Did you know?”

While putting a sugar cube in her coffee, Riku started to recall about the geography of the city.

On the map she was given in advance to coming the place, there was a big “X” symbol on a certain area. She didn’t think too deeply about that, but she assumed what Keity was talking was about that.

“More or less.”

“Then, it makes it more simple. In that area, there is a shrine.

Making contact with the Shibira shrine located there was in fact one of Charlotte-sama's secret objectives."

"Shibira?"

"It's the temple of the blind. The people that succeed that name, in exchange for not being able to see the reality, are able to see the future, or so it is said."

"Future?"

Riku put one more sugar cube on her coffee. The white lump of sugar was slowly sinking down. Mixing it up with a spoon, she easily made the two sugar cubes dissolve in a short amount of time. Becoming scattered in small pieces inside the black liquid, it gradually melted into it. Looking at such scene, Riku felt a feeling that couldn't really be described with words. Unconsciously, she picked up another sugar cube and added to the coffee.

Looking at how she was acting, Keity twisted her face.

"You don't believe it, right? Look, it is said that the future the Shibira see are absolute. Knowing the future sooner can be useful for preparing for calamities that are going to happen."

"And then, be manipulated by that decided future? ...I don't really like this sort of pre-decided kind of way of thinking."

Defined future, unchangeable something... This could be said destiny was something that didn't allow such things to change. But imposing that didn't feel like a good thing to her. Just because she didn't have talent, she was thrown away. Just because she was a human, she was always treated as a traitor. Was it really impossible to change things that were decided from the start? Inside her heart, resentment was accumulating. In order to wash it off, she drank her coffee.

"Lieutenant colonel Keity Fostar. Would you follow the future decided by somebody else?"

“But all of that is the truth. In fact, Charlotte-sama’s elder brother... It seems that because he ignored the Shibira’s predictions, he was defeated. That’s why this time, we need to make full use of it.”

“Is that, so?”

“That’s right. But the problem starts now... In order to enter that off limits area, unless you are royalty or a member of one of the spiritualists families, then you are not permitted inside. Shibira’s prophecies are an existence that carries a might which is of great influence after all.

Keity put milk to her coffee. On the black surface of the coffee, a white circle of milk was formed. Seeing how both of them were stirring their coffee, Riku asked Keity a question.

“If that is the case, then how are you planning on getting there?”

“Umu, what the plan was at first was to make use of the confusion of the festival and have one of us escorts to kidnap a Shibira. But having one less person would be a problem. Therefore, we assigned you to be her bodyguard.”*1

But they didn’t consider the possibility of a plan of having Charlotte getting friendly with a spiritualist. Now, whether it was because he was soft-hearted over her or because he had secret intentions, regardless of what it was, he had a liking to Charlotte without doubt. Using this to her advantage, rather than taking the risk of invading that area, she might be able to get to the Shibira by a legitimate method. That is why Charlotte purposely drove Riku away. Thinking about it to this point, Riku snorted.

“...That’s too naive.”

Riku couldn’t imagine that Charlotte thinking all of that and asking her to let her be alone together with that silver haired boy. She didn’t know the details, but the feelings contained at

her gaze when she looked at the silver haired boy wasn't the feeling of wanting to use him, nor some sort of acting to feign harmlessness. It was clearly a gaze of someone that had fallen in love.

Riku drank the remaining coffee at one go. The extreme sweetness completely overlapped the characteristic bitter taste. Maybe she put too many sugar cubes. Pondering about the sweetness, she drank the coffee up and stood from her seat.

"Thank's for the treat, lieutenant colonel Keity Foster. Now then, I will be taking my leave."

"Wha-, are you going already? All my tasks were already done once I got you separated from Charlotte-sama. So, won't you enjoy the coffee a bit more with me?"

Ignoring her offer, Riku left the coffee shop.

Right at that moment, the cold of the blowing wind pierced her skin. She buried her face on her muffler and put her hands on her pocket. Then, Riku started walking, having her posture bended a bit forward. Then, by the time she saw the signboard of the inn, the turmoil of the main street had already got distant. As she was thinking on how it was better for it to be this quiet, she saw there was a boy in front of the signboard standing as if he was waiting for someone. He was using a hat and was looking at the surroundings worriedly. Right when the boy noticed Riku's figure, he enthusiastically smiled.

"First lieutenant Riku Barusak! No, captain!"

The boy... Roppu Nezaarand, full of energy, came running like the wind.

"Congratulations for the promotion."

"Sergeant major Nezaarand, what's the matter?"

"Y, yes! Actually, I received an order to be transferred to the captain's squad and came to give my greetings. And also one

more thing, which was to give you a letter to the captain.”

From his pouch, he took out one letter. The name of the sender wasn't written on the white letter. Without even opening it, she just threw it inside her pouch.

“Err... Ah, yes. Captain, please take care of me from now on!”*2

“Yes. Likewise. Do your best.”

“Yes! I will give my all!! ...By the way, captain Barusak... Uhh, is it fine if you don't read the letter?”

With a face that showing his shyness, he asked her.

“I don't feel like reading right now. By the way, who is that letter from? Would it be from lieutenant general Gortoberuk?”

“N, no. It is from lieutenant general Adlar. Since their army were stationed close by, I went there to give my greetings to the fourth army... And so, I was entrusted with giving captain this letter.”

“You should have told me sooner!”

Riku hurriedly took out the letter and opened it. It was the first time she received a letter from Leivein himself. Riku carefully unfolded the paper inside. On that paper, there were several lines of words elegantly written. Indeed, only several. But even if it was only this many, since they were written for her, she was very happy. But...

“...You've done a good job at the Myuuz castle. This time's task you were assigned to is of great honor. Protect Charlotte-sama even at the cost of your life.” Is it?”

Riku feelings were a bit complicated right now. If it was for the sake of protecting the supreme commander of the Demon Lord army, she would put her life on stake; she was aware of the responsibility. But perhaps... If she had received this letter

before she met Charlotte, maybe the feelings she was feeling right now would be different. Perhaps she would be a bit more eager to correspond to his expectations. But unfortunately, she had received the letter after finishing her escorting duty.

“I’m very much sorry... Captain Leivein, it will be difficult to meet these expectations.”

She didn’t have the confidence of being capable of throwing away her life in order to protect Charlotte. No, she didn’t want to protect her at all. No matter how much it was Leivein’s orders, only that was impossible. This Demon Lord substitute that would harbor attachment to a person that had connections to the spiritualists was just a detestable fool. Her heart wasn’t so big for her to care about it. Folding the letter carefully, she put it inside her pouch.

“Now that I think about it, where would Charlotte-sama be right now?”

“I don’t know. She should be having fun somewhere.”

And right as Riku said those words.

“It’s terrible!”

A single man was running through the main street. Many people were gathering, wondering what the man was screaming. Breathing heavily, once the gathered people were looking at him, he said with a loud voice.

“De-demons have appeared!! Just now, at the other side of the main street, the spiritualists were exterminating them!

Immediately, both Riku and Roppu looked at each other. Right now, the only demons that were at the town were Charlotte’s escorts and herself.

“Is this true?”

“It’s true! But they said there might be others.”

“What did you say!? Your are saying that there might be demons hiding in the town!?”

“Yes. They even left alive a little demon girl for getting information about that.”

In other words, Charlotte was captured and all her escorts were killed. Riku didn't know until when Charlotte would be able to keep her mouth shut, but she was worried that she would let her existence being known to the enemy. Right now, would it be better to retreat together with Roppu or for her to go save Charlotte?

“Ca-captain. What should we do?”

Roppu was hiding behind Riku.*3 Even if Riku had red hair, she was still a human. She didn't have to worry about being found as a demon. But if someone was to take away Roppu's hat, his rabbit ears would reveal his identity. If he were to declare it was only a costume, it might still be fine, but if a spiritualist was to check it, he would notice Roppu was a demon without doubt. Maybe that's the reason why Charlotte got exposed as a demon.

It was better for Riku to run away in this situation. Leivein ordered Riku to protect Charlotte, but Charlotte herself refused the protection. There was no need for Riku to go save her. But right when Riku took Roppu's hand and was about to enter the inn...

“But for them to leave one demon alive as a prisoner... Who was the spiritualist that allowed that?”

“Don't you know? It is that famous heir of the Barusak household.”

Due to the words that shouldn't have been spoken, Riku stopped her feet.

“The ones that killed all the demons were that heir and some

female spiritualists that came together with him. But when they were about to kill that last tiny demon, he stopped them.”

The heir.

Riku’s memories were being brought back.

It was her younger brother who would coil around her feet when they were still young. From times to times, they would eat sweets and play together. The younger brother who started to talk more adult-like and started to invent strange things after he became four years old. The younger brother whose name was...

“Rook Barusak.”

In accord to Riku’s memories, he had a silver hair that felt it was almost transparent.

And then, there was that silver haired spiritualist who got close to Charlotte. Noticing that, Riku whispered near Roppu’s ears.

“Sergeant major Roppu Nezaarand, with your speed, it is possible for you to get to where Vrusto is in one day, right?”

By being suddenly asked of something, Roppu got surprised. Quickly looking at the surroundings, when he confirmed that the attention of the people around weren’t at them, he whispered back in a low voice.

“It is possible. Since he also received a day off, right now he should be at the fourth army’s garrison... But, why are you asking me that?”

“Isn’t it obvious? With his nose, we will be able to find Charlotte.”

Riku had a smiling face.

It was fortunate that there were Charlotte’s luggage remaining at the inn. Following the smell, it should be possible

to know where Charlotte is, and at the same time, it would be possible to determine where Rook Barusak is without mistake. To that feeling of finally reuniting with her younger brother she hadn't met for ten years, there was no way Riku's heart wouldn't be dancing around.

And besides... With that, it would be possible for her to carry out Leivein's task of protecting Charlotte.

"I can't wait. To think I would be able to see Rook grown up."

Riku was now thinking about what sort of things she should say when she meets him. On that face which was being illuminated by the sunset, she had an atrocious smile.

1. The way it is stated at the japanese one makes it feel like having one less soldiers is really really a big deal. Something like -1 soldier = insta death
2. Needed to add some words because otherwise it wouldn't make any sense in english.
3. ロップは、リクの後ろに隠れるように回っていたwhy ->回っていた<- this? D:

Names:

ケイティ・フォスター: Keity Fostar

Chapter 22

The Encounter

After getting back to the inn, she quietly shut herself in her room, without leaving from there for one day.

She would write letters she was going to send to Leivein, check the conditions of her weapons, and just like now, sometimes she would sit close to the window to enjoy the view outside. Leaving the big window open-wide, she would look at the city at night. Right now, Riku was lost in her thoughts.

Looking at the Derufoi city from that height, it was possible to notice that it wasn't a very big city. It was many times smaller than the capital and didn't have the same splendor as Perikka did. The old buildings made of stone would all stand lined next to each other as if all were cuddling together towards the center of the main street. But even with that said, it was by no means disordered, but would actually would give off an harmonizing feeling of antiquity, bringing forth a good feeling. For some reason, as if it was at the eve of the festival, while the other streets were all in dark, the main street was full of lights.

At the ends of the lively main street, there was a deep forest. If one was to strain one's eyes and look, it would be possible to notice there was a small building dimly shining white at the center of the forest.

"Would there be where the shrine where the Shibira are at...?"

Riku gave a small sigh.

The forest where the shrine was coincided with the place an "X" was drawn at the map. But to Riku, this didn't matter at all. The information that Riku needed right now was only the

location of Charlotte and Rook Barusak. Other than that, she didn't have any interest.

Grasping the halberd that was next to her, she took off the cloth that enveloped its axe-like blade. Being bathed by the moonlight, the tip of the blade dimly shone. She even thought about practicing with the halberd outside, but there was too much turmoil over the demon invasion. There was no need for her to take the trouble of going outside just to catch unwanted attention.

"There is not even a scratch on the blade; it can be used anytime."

Muttering that to herself, she once again enveloped the blade with the cloth.

As it would be expected, Charlotte and her escorts that went after her weren't coming back to the inn. Keity was the only one that did, but with lifeless eyes, she was motionless, depressed at the corner of the room. Before, she was searching around the city, but it seems that in the end, tripped and fell down, fracturing her leg. Since the time Charlotte was kidnapped, one day had passed, and during all this time, she was like that.

"Ah, it's because I wasn't beside her... Because of me that... that Charlotte-sama..."

Repeating the same thing, she looked like she became a doll that would only speak the same set of words.

"Really, you are too naive."

Finishing enveloping the blade with the cloth, this time she drew the silver sword that was at her waist. The slender blade that would give off a silverly light was a war spoil she got at the time when she killed Selestinna. She didn't really want to use something a spiritualist used to use, but the sensation it gave off when she used it was very nice. As if she had been using it

for a very long time, it felt very familiar to her hands, and gave the sensation that just by lightly swinging it, it would slice off the enemy just the way she would desire. Of course, it was inferior to the halberd she had been often using for these many years, but it didn't change the fact that it was a very easy to handle weapon. At places that are too narrow and would make it difficult to use the halberd, this would come in handy.

At spaces such as this room, using the sword instead could be better.

“...Such a noisy night.”

Even though the demons had appeared yesterday, the main street was s. The music from the lively festival was resounding.

Then, it was possible to hear footsteps that gave off a feeling of danger from the corridor, although the sound of the festival was more or less concealing the sound of the footsteps. Riku held her sword tight. The moment Riku walked away from the window, the door was violently opened.

Several men wearing armor entered the room. In an instant, the men surrounded Riku and Keity, holding their sword with a stance which the sword was positioned vertically.

As if to protect Keity, who was completely trembling, Riku stepped forward. And then, the men glared at her with a lot of killing intent.

“Who?”

“We are spiritualists from Buryuccer.”

“We know that you guys are demons!”

“Demons? I'm a human though?”

Even though she told them the truth, they were still glaring at her. Spitting out saliva, one of the spiritualist yelled.

“Don't play dumb! From our investigations, we confirmed

that there are demons staying here!”

“Who told you that?”

“It’s something you would know right away if you look around all the inns of the city!”

Riku gave out a sigh of relief. It seems that Charlotte didn’t blurt out about this place. Since that is the case, she still might be able to fool them. Putting her sword at her scabbard, she intentionally let out a long sigh.

“I’m a human. I’m not a demon. If you think that is a lie, then try cutting me.”

“You think that just by saying that we won’t cut you!? You stupid demon!”

The spiritualists were showing despicable smiles. Then, swinging it upward, the sword grazed at her cheek. If Riku was a demon, her brains would have been scattered around by now. However, Riku was only left with a small cut at her cheek. Wiping off the blood on her cheek, she spoke in a low voice.

“...What am I supposed to do if it leaves a scar?”

With how Riku was really a human, and how they had just damaged a girl’s face, the spiritualists were embarrassed. As if to stab at their uneasiness, Riku pressed on.

“Ah... Uhh...”

“With this red hair I already have a very low chance of being able to marry, but now with this scar... With that, will I remain unmarried for the rest of my life?”

“I-I’m sorry!”

“Sorry? You... You think you can settle everything with only that? Suddenly entering in somebody else’s room and saying that I’m a demon, and you even attacked me. And now with this scar!! This is a catastrophe... Even though this hair is

already a disaster by itself.”

With her voice little by little becoming full of sorrow, she started trembling. As if to hide her wound, she covered her face with both hands and went down to the floor.

The spiritualists were looking at one another without knowing what to do. As expected, for how they one-sidedly decided she was a demon and even hurt her, they thoughts were that they did something unforgivable. One of the spiritualists then put a small bottle that had medical cream inside on her hands.

“I-I’m very sorry. It seems that our investigations were lacking. Here, use this medicine. It should heal right away.”

“...Is it true?”

“Of course! We use it for light wounds very often. It should heal in three days.”

“If any marks remain even then, then I want compensation. It is really unforgivable...”

The spiritualists left the room all with pale faces. Riku was still sitting at the floor, but when she was sure the footsteps were completely gone, she raised her face. Her face was one that was as if nothing had happened; a face without a single drop of tear.

Keity timidly spoke to Riku.

“Err... Are you alright?”

“It’s good that you are fine too, lieutenant coronel Foster.”

When it became clear to the spiritualists that Riku was a human, they also assumed Keity was a human too. It didn’t go through the heads the possibility of a human and a demon staying at the same room.

“Leaving that aside, he is too late.”

While clicking her tongue, Riku threw the medicine at her pouch. And right at that moment, a demon with a wolf face nimbly jumped inside the room from the window. Then Riku glared at the demon who was smiling.

“You are late, warrant officer Vrusto.”

“Ah, sorry, sorry. I got a bit busy on the way. That aside, I’ve been promoted to second lieutenant thought?”

As he gave his complaints, Vrusto scratched his head.

“Is that so? Congratulations for the promotion. Now then, the concern right now is that I need you to follow Charlotte-sama’s smell, but...”

“...You called me only to use me as a sniffer dog?”*2

Riku threw one of Charlotte’s luggage to Vrusto. Catching it, Vrusto sniffed it as if it was a pain to do.

“Now, I only need to find where Charlotte-sama is, right? More than that, you... weren’t you her bodyguard? How did they kidnap her?”

“...Actually, she ordered me to leave her alone with somebody else.”

“Seriously? But don’t you know how the upper brass decides on things?”

Vrusto showed an disgusted face.

It was as he had said. No matter how Charlotte herself was the one that ordered that, she might get the responsibility for not being able to stop her. If something like that ends up happening, at this time, she would present Keity to them as her scapegoat without any hesitation. Riku herself tried to stop Charlotte, but Keity got in Riku’s way. The one to blame for all that wasn’t Riku. Keity also agreed to do that, but even with that already planned, there was still the possibility of her

getting a punishment for collective responsibility due to how she had been entrusted to deal with the unexpected occurrences. She needed to avoid that at all costs.

“That’s why I called you.”

Riku didn’t care one bit about Charlotte. But if she only cared about killing Rook, even after being able to do that... If there was any chance of her being unable to be together with Leivein because of her actions, then she could only choose one of the choices right now.*3

“...Is that so, ojou-chan?”

Vrusto was showing a face of someone that wanted to say something.

But Riku ignored it. Picking up the halberd that was leaning against the wall and carrying it at her back, she put her foot at the frame of the window.*4 Looking at the street bellow her, she saw Roppu waving his hand. As if saying that it was fine for her to go down now, he did a signal with his hand. Looking at the completely desolate street, Riku sighed.

“Lieutenant coronal Foster, I have to bother you with taking care of the room while we are out.”

“I understand... I will leave Charlotte-sama to you.”

Keity said in a pained tone. If she was able to move her feet, she would have also joined in the searching party. Feeling the sorrow of the voice that came from her back, she jumped from the window frame.*5 Landing without any sounds like a cat, she waited for Vrusto to jump down as well. Landing next to Riku, Vrusto stretched out his shoulders.

“So, let’s go, ojou-chan?”

Moving his nose, Vrusto sniffed the smell on the air. And then, he started to walk at a fast pace and Riku followed after him. The three people were walking around the dark city. It

was possible for them to hear all the noise of the festival at the main street from there.

“Once you locate where Charlotte-sama is... What should we do?”

Looking at Riku, Roppu asked.

“That’s your role, right? All me and ojou-chan can do pretty much is to go burst forward through the front door. We will rely on you for lock picking the back.”

Before Riku could answer, Vrusto declared in a low voice. Due to that answer, Roppu started trembling.

“Eh, lock picking? Bu-but I don’t know how to do that... Besides, doesn’t it make us the same as robbers!?”

“Stupid, infiltrating isn’t a respectable act either wa... Hm?”

Vrusto’s nose moved, and then he stopped his feet. Right after that, he extended his arm sideways as if he was trying to tell them not to proceed further. Neither Riku nor Roppu knew what was going on, but they assumed he felt there was something strange. Riku moved her hand near to the halberd at her back.

“Captain Riku Barusak, second lieutenant Vrusto Asuteroid, sergeant major Roppu Nezaarand. I’m not a suspicious person.”

From the sudden appearance, Riku unconsciously got. After putting the axe blade at the neck of that person, Riku raised her eyebrows. The one standing there wasn’t a human. It was a small demon. With her cute squirrel ears moving, she was looking at them with her adorable big eyes. Even though Riku had her halberd next to her neck, that demon had a gentle smile showing on her face.

“I’m called Kurumi Shouru, from the intelligence division. Please, let me help you with searching Charlotte-sama.”

-
1. Nothing here
 2. I needed to add more words, otherwise it would be misleading and feel like Vrusto didn't care about Charlotte.
 3. リクは、シャルロットがどうなっても構わない。だけれども、ルークを始末した後.....レーヴェンの隣に居られる可能性が遠くなってしまうなら、選択肢は1つしかなかった。I don't know what this part is supposed to mean ^^ I basically had to add a bunch of stuff for it to make sense. I think it is good enough that it wouldn't be weird if the message it wanted to pass was the same as the one I wrote, but if it was different, then it can't be helped 😞
 4. It doesn't say what the halberd was leaning against. It could have been a chair, for instance ￣￣￣￣￣ Lack of descriptions only when it is needed ￣￣￣￣￣￣￣￣￣￣
 5. 悲痛な声を背中で感じながらFeeling with your back? wut? Disciple doesn't know. Master google, why won't you tell me, sir?

Names:

クルミ・ショール: Kurumi Shouru

ヴルスト・アステロイド: Vrusto Asuteroid

(I shall not let Vrusto be called asteroid!! NEVERRRRR!!!!)

Chapter 23

For the Future

“You want to help?”

Riku narrowed her eyes.

The demon that named herself as Kurumi was showing a gentle smile. That is, even though she had a halberd right next to her neck. If Riku wanted to, that girl would lose her head in one second.

But despite that, Kurumi was smiling. Whether it was the enemy, whether it was anyone else, there shouldn't have been anybody that would show a smile to a blade full of killing intent. Perhaps it was because Kurumi was absolutely certain she wouldn't lose her head, and also had the self-confidence and was carefree enough that she could act like that.

“Yes. I'm also a member of the demon lord army after all.”

Kurumi's voice didn't hold any hesitation. There were no signs of panic. For she to not have any changes at her face even though she was pressed on to this point, maybe being able to do such thing was the reason why she was able to keep up as a member of the intelligence division. Thinking like that, any suspicions would fade away.

But... Riku didn't feel she should remove the halberd from her neck yet. Since Riku remained silent, in her stead, Vrusto spoke.

“Hey, why do you know our names? I can't be helped for you to know ojou-chan's name since she is a human, but I don't think I'm such a famous person for that.”

While exposing his fangs, he was looking at the little Kurumi.

Even though Vrusto, who could be said to be a beast , approached Kurumi, who in comparison would be a little animal, she didn't falter at all. Without flinching from his intimidating air, Kurumi politely spoke.

“That is untrue, second lieutenant Asuteroid. I've heard that you were the one who taught military arts to captain Riku Barusak, who had got many achievements at the Myuuz castle battle. Sergeant major Roppu Nezaarand too. It is spoken of that you slipped through the enemies and were able to inform the fall of the fort. Perhaps you are not self-aware of that, but you are quite a famous person.”

“I-is that so?”

Vrusto scratched his head embarrassed. All the weariness he had before had dispersed and he got softened up.

Riku glared at Vrusto. Then, with all her strength, she hit Vrusto, who had a silly smile on his face, at his flank with her elbow. Twisting his face, Vrusto groaned from the pain and took distance from Riku.

“You brat! What are you doing!”

While rubbing the place she hit, Vrusto was glaring at Riku. Even so, Riku wasn't feeling any ounce of guilt.

“It's because you had a stupid face on. That's all.”

“If you want to talk about stupidity, then shouldn't it be this rabbit brat!?”

Ignoring Vrusto's clamor, Riku turned her eyes back to Kurumi. With her adorable big eyes, Kurumi too was silently looking at Riku.

Kurumi was a demon. Her ears were genuine squirrel ears. It was clearly different from the costumes that were being used at the downtown. It wasn't possible to think a demon would be allied to humans.

But Riku couldn't trust Kurumi. She couldn't put into words why she wasn't able to trust her, but she really had the feeling that Kurumi was hiding something behind her smile.

Whether to trust her own instincts or to trust Kurumi. Riku had only those two choices.

But regardless what she would be going to do, the clock was ticking. By chance, it was possible that something would happen to Charlotte or that Rook Barusak would leave the town. She didn't have time to waste on thinking.

"I beg you, captain. I'm from the intelligence division, so I can be of use for infiltration. I also investigated where Charlotte-sama is being held captive! But as expected, this time I'm a bit anxious in going there alone so... Please!"

Kurumi spoke trying to pursue the matter.

She still had her smile on, but it was possible to notice signs of desperation on her eyes. She couldn't see then as eyes of a liar. And it was possible to understand her hesitation for infiltrating on the enemy's place by herself. It was a possibility for her to run into the next head of the Barusak once she got close to Charlotte. By looking at Kurumi, it didn't seem like she was very proficient in fighting. If she were to directly confront Rook, she would be killed in less than one second. That's why she wanted to join them. Kurumi's request wasn't really absurd.

But Riku couldn't decide over that. There was nothing strange about her situation, but she still had a bad feeling over it.

While Riku was still pondering about that, Roppu, who had been quiet behind her, timidly stepped forward.

"Err... Captain Barusak, I think it is fine to trust this person. It doesn't seem like she is telling any lies."

"...Sergeant major."

Riku muttered in a low voice.

Just as Roppu said, Kurumi didn't seem to be lying. But there was something behind the scenes. Without doubt, she was hiding something. If it wasn't for that case, she wouldn't be smiling. Even so, she didn't have the time to inquire Kurumi about that.

She was lost and didn't know which choice she should choose. Then, Vrusto whispered next to her ear.

"Ojou-chan, let's just say we go on with this guy's proposal."

"Go on with?"

Roli muttered in reaction. Then, Vrusto continued what he was talking in a lower voice.

"Yes. I will keep up following Charlotte-sama's smell. If the place her smell is coming from and the place this squirrel girl is leading us to matches, then we can confirm she wasn't lying. And if there is anything slightly off, then we can know she was trying to deceive us."

The place the smell is coming from wouldn't really change whatever it may happen, and so was reliable. If Kurumi wants to deceive them and brings them to a different place, then in this case, she can just kill her for being a traitor.

"I beg you!"

With her forehead to the ground, Kurumi persisted with her request. Giving off a big sigh, Riku made her resolve.

"I... Don't want to kill my companions and get punished because of that. It will cause bad reputation to captain Leivein after all."

Riku took the halberd off Kurumi's neck. Even though Kurumi had been showing a smile, she was very tense after all. Kurumi let out a sigh out of relief.

“Thank you very much. I will do my best!”

“Don’t get the wrong idea. The moment it is clear you betrayed us, I will kill you.”

“Understood, captain. Now, please follow me.”

Kurumi nodded with a smile.

Being guided by Kurumi, Riku and the others were going through the city. After moving forward for some moment, the tumult of the main street started to get distant. They entered in a quiet residential area. As if everyone had gone out to the main street, there were no signs of human presence there. Riku, who got worried about it, whispered to Vrusto.

“Is it matching?”

“Yes, it is. What’s more, the smell is even stronger. If Charlotte-sama herself wasn’t here, then there wouldn’t be this much smell remaining.”

In the end, it seems Kurumi really knew where Charlotte was.

But Riku still felt a feeling as bad as the feeling of getting a fish bone stuck in the throat. The moment Kurumi turned her head to Riku and said “This way”, it couldn’t be helped for Riku to get concerned about the way she was gazing her. She wasn’t really well disposed about Riku. But even with that as the case, her gaze didn’t hold despise and was a weird gaze.

One word that could describe it would be “hostility”. The hostility her gaze held wasn’t spirited like the one given at the battlefield, and it was also different from the looks she would habitually receive at the barracks. It was a type of hostility that Riku had never felt until now.

She could only wonder what that was about.

“It’s there.”

While Riku was still thinking about that, Kurumi had stopped

her feet.

Kurumi pointed to the mansion ahead. Its size wasn't as big as Gortoberuk's villa, but even so, it was a mansion big enough for it to feel out of the place from such a small city like Derufoi. There, there was a gatekeeper standing there, being vigilant to the surroundings.

"This is the mansion of the lord that governs Derufoi city. Charlotte-sama is locked in there."

Riku turned her gaze to Vrusto. After Vrusto's nose moved, he gave his positive.

"It's just as she says... Charlotte-sama's smell is coming from that residence."

"Is that so... Now, how are we supposed to sneak in there?"

"This way."

Kurumi pointed out an alley.

After going through the alley with vigilance, they stopped at a dead end. Getting close to the floor, which was covered with stone slabs, Kurumi started to examine it as if she was looking for something. And then, she took out one of the big slabs. At the place where the slab was, there was a hole that was barely big enough for a person to go through. If Riku was using her armor now, she might have not been able to go through. At the hole, there was a ladder, which went on very deeply through the ground. Riku looked at the hole, but she couldn't see the bottom of it.

"There is a corridor underground that is connected to the residence. We can infiltrate there through here."

"...Are you sure it really connects with that residence from earlier?"

To Riku's question, Kurumi affirmatively nodded.

From here on, it might be difficult to rely on Vrusto's nose. She was a bit worried about it, but she didn't have the time to be hesitating.

"Sergeant major Nezaarand, for the moment, you stay here. In case anything happens, you should immediately retreat. Then, you should go after lieutenant colonel Foster and follow her orders. Second lieutenant Vrusto should come with me. ... Kurumi Shouru, I will rely on you to guide us."

"Understood!"

"Yes, yes."

"I understand."

Kurumi put her foot onto the ladder and went down. Riku and Vrusto followed her afterwards. They went down the ladder that was cold and solid to the hands step by step. One could only wonder how far the ladder went on. Looking up, Riku saw Roppu looking at the hole with a worried face at the distance.

When they finally put down their feet to the ground, Roppu's figure was only of a dot. Because it was underground, Riku thought that it would be so dark it wouldn't be possible to see even an inch ahead, but it wasn't the case. There was moss growing at the wall; they were giving off a faint light. Because of that, it was possible to see a few steps of distance ahead.

"Even though lightmoss is growing here... It is still very dark. Let me prepare some illumination."

Right as Kurumi said that, she lighted up a lamp. The faint darkness of the underground corridor became bright in an instant. There was nobody there. She thought about the possibility of somebody laying an ambush here, but it seems that it wasn't the case.

"Perhaps, could it be that... Captain is being suspicious of me?"

Kurumi asked worriedly. Then, Riku showed a wry smile. It seems her face had revealed her worries.

“I’m not being suspicious. I can just kill you if you betray us after all.”

“...That’s being suspicious.”

Vrusto muttered something, but Riku ignored it. Kurumi shrugged her shoulders to Riku’s answer.

“You are scared, aren’t you?”

“Does it look like that to you?”

“That’s right... This way.”

Kurumi kept advancing through the corridor.

The sound of their footsteps resounded in an illusory manner. Kurumi was at the front, guiding them, and glaring at her back was Riku. Behind Riku was Vrusto, which was taking care to protect the rearguard as he was walking. One could only wonder how much time passed then. They had been walking for about one hour, but Kurumi didn’t show any signs of stopping to walk. Without giving too much heed, Riku asked.

“Is it really this way?”

Riku intended to speak in a low voice, but even so, her voice echoed through the corridor. If there were any enemies hiding around, they would have immediately noticed Riku’s presence. But as if completely being indifferent to Riku’s worries, she smiled.

“It’s fine. There is no mistake.”

As if there were no problems, Kurumi turned her way to a different direction. Because how naturally Kurumi had done so, Riku became a bit less worried about it. And following after Kurumi, she also went the same way. And at that exact

moment...

“That’s where you will die.”

The exact moment when she turned her way, the faintly dark corridor became overflowed with a very intense light. It was so bright that she had shut her eyes. Despite that, she wielded her halberd. But even so, the consequence of having her sight stolen were big. Right when she thought she felt killing intent from the direction the light came from, an arrow was already right in front of her eyes. She tried to avoid it, but she wasn’t in time. The arrow hit her arm.

“Ojou-chan!!”

Vrusto’s shout echoed. Drawing the sword at his waist, he ran next to Riku. While twisting her face in pain, she took out the arrow. The wound wasn’t as deep as she thought it was and wasn’t bleeding too much.

“I’m alright.”

After giving a glance to the wound at her arm, she looked ahead. The light had completely faded away and the corridor had gone back to its faint darkness. Next to Kurumi, there was the figure of a little girl standing there. Her wheat colored hair was tied in braids. The little braided girl was glaring at Riku as if Riku was the one that had killed her parents. Guessing from how she was holding a bow, Riku assumed she was the one that had shot the arrow.

“What you did just now... Was that a flashbang? You can really do it, can’t you?”

Vrusto kicked the orb on the floor that was close to his feet. Riku started to slowly rotate her halberd.

“...Then, Kurumi Shouru is a traitor.”

“Traitor? I’m fighting for the future of the demons.”

Kurumi's smile vanished from her face. What was behind her smiling mask was an expression that looked as sharp as a blade. Without any uncertainties, she was giving Riku a sharp look.

"Future?"

"That's right. For the sake of the future Rook will build, I will swing my blade."

As if she was some kind of illusionist, knives appeared between each of Kurumi's fingers.

"A future spiritualists will build? Are you stupid?"

Vrusto barked in a low voice. Vrusto must be boiling with anger. His fur was standing up and he had his eyes open-wide.

"If that's the case, then shouldn't you stop the war already? Aren't the spiritualists still attacking us?"

"It's for the sake of having the minimum amount of blood spilled. For that purpose, I need you two to die."

Kurumi wasn't looking at Vrusto. She only kept glaring at Riku. It seems that at some point in time Riku got Kurumi to hold resentment over her. As she was trying to remember the time she had met Kurumi, Riku spoke.

"Oh, is it inconvenient for you to have me living?"

"That's obvious. If Rook knew you survived... He would definitely become sad."

"Sad?"

Riku blurted in a off-toned voice. Just from the surprise, the halberd she was holding felt like it would fall down. Riku thought Kurumi had misspoken something, but it seems that wasn't the case. With a serious face, Kurumi declared.

"That's right. Because, his own sister he thought to be dead is killing her own people... killing spiritualists. Because of his love for his family, it will make him suffer to hold grudges to you..."

That's why before he knows of your existence, we will kill you."

"Rook got very sad because Selestinna was killed. If he knew it was his sister who did it, he would become even sadder. Rook is already full of pain. That's why I won't let you make him have more pain!"

Following Kurumi's words, the braid little girl spoke. It seems that the little girl wanted to kill Riku as well. In the girl's eyes, flames of anger were burning.

"...So they said. What should we do?"

Vrusto quietly asked. But Riku wasn't able to answer that question.

"Aha. Ahahahahahaha!"

Instead, Riku started to laugh in a loud voice. No matter how she would interpret it, all that was simply too funny. The two people glaring at her full of resentment and hatred were like two clowns dancing on sloppy moves.

"That guy is full of pain? Sad because I became his enemy? That's why you will kill me before he knows I survived?"

"Y-yes, that's right. What's the problem with that!?"

"There is a problem. I will die from laughing so much."*1

Riku didn't miss how they gave one step back. Calmly, Riku was gradually closing the distance between them.

"First, about the female pig. If he has so much time to be sad, then he could have simply not let her go to war in first place."

Riku put herself on his place and started to think. In a battle, if she were to survive, but Leivein were to die, rather than being sad over his death, she would blame herself. That would be because she wasn't capable of protecting him. More than holding a grudge, she would regret of her own powerlessness.

"If he didn't want her to die, it would have been better for

him to keep her at a cage. All this is pretty much that his beloved bird he was raising got shot down by some hunter. The hunter was only properly doing his job. The bird simply wasn't able to run away."

"Selestinna-oneesan isn't a bird!!"

The braid girl drew her sword. Infusing her power in the sword, it started to become enveloped with water. Even though she was young, her power as a spiritualist was already flourishing.

"Kurumi-oneechan, that person is weird. We definitely can't let her meet Rook!"

"That's right, Rebecca. We will tidy up this mess ourselves."

Kurumi lightly patted the head of the braid girl she had just called Rebecca.

Riku noticed there was a ladder just a bit behind Kurumi and Rebecca. Somehow, she had the feeling that ladder would lead them to where Rook was. Riku leaned her halberd on her shoulder.

"Second lieutenant Vrusto. Let's make them covered in blood."

"Stupid. Even if you don't tell me, I was planning on doing that."

Vrusto already was wielding his sword.

His tone of voice was just like his usual, but even so, it still held a bit of anger. From Riku's point of view, she noticed he was holding his sword with more strength than usual.

"Let's get through this and get outta here, ojou-chan."

"While carrying their heads, right?"

She couldn't imagine Rook being sad if he knew she was alive. He probably would get angry instead. There was no way

Rook, who was leading the “proper” life at the prestigious Barusak household, wouldn’t be thinking about the sister that was thrown away that kindly.*2 He would probably want her get a death penalty after how she killed that spiritualist head in cold blood and pointed her blade to her own family.

“Well then, shall we begin?”

For the sake of depriving Kurumi and that braided girl of their future and making Rook Barusak fall in despair.

Lowering down her stance, Riku slowly licked her lips.

1. ”There is a problem. I will die from laughing so much.”
(Puts glasses)*

It became like that by accident when I was translating... This was destiny! Even if it is not the literal meaning, who cares? 「え、ええそうよ。何がおかしいの！！」「おかしいわ。笑い死にそうよ」

2. I’m not sure how I’m supposed to translate this ->純粹培養<-word.

Chapter 24

Have Your Mouth Shut for Eternity

The first to go forward was Rebecca.

Raising her water covered sword, she charged at Riku. Riku defended the attack by parrying it in accordance to the orbit of the blow with her halberd. With her stance broken, Rebecca staggered a bit, and Riku wouldn't let this chance go by. Riku swung her halberd upwards.

“N-not yet!”

Making the water that was enveloping the sword take the shape of a shield, she positioned it to protect herself. It was a shield that was made solid by compressing the water. But such didn't matter to Riku. As if she was cutting paper, the halberd was cutting the water shield into pieces.

It would be good if she maintained the pressure until. But things wouldn't end that easily. Just barely, Rebecca, who was at the other side of the shield, barely regained her posture.

“What!?”

“What's the matter? Is all you've got only this much?”

As if having her shield destroyed being something regrettable, Rebecca twisted her face. She inflated her cheeks and glared at Riku.

“Uu... This stupid girl! Die for Rook!!”

Like a surging wave, she once again attacked Riku. If she was able to practice for ten more years, maybe she would have been able to become an exceptional swordswoman. But Rebecca was too young right now. As if she left her body to her anger, she kept swinging her sword. More than anything, there

were many flaws in her swordsmanship. Although each of her strikes were full of power, by then, Riku had already seen through it.

“Is that so? Then, go die.”

To the battle that was more boring than she expected it would be, Riku let out a sigh.

Rebecca became panicked and tried to take distance by jumping back. However, Riku didn't let her escape.

“I caught you.”

After she got right next to Rebecca, she held her down. Holding down both of her hands with her left hand, Riku pressed Rebecca down with her right foot at Rebecca's chest. Just like that, using her weight of her whole body, Riku pinned her down. Groaning, Rebecca tried to get away, but it only ended in futile resistance. Riku looked down at Rebecca with uninterested eyes.

“Goodbye, young spiritualist-san.”

Riku raised the halberd she was holding with her right hand. Rebecca was still struggling, but as if she had noticed something, she opened her eyes wide and stopped her struggle.

“It's a shame, onee-chan.”

In reaction to the out of place smile, Riku's hand stopped. She frowned, puzzled.

“What?”

It was right at the instant she said that. Two knives Kurumi had thrown were flying through the air. The knives that were thrown at a speed comparable to arrows were rushing to her defenseless back. Because she was using her left hand to hold down Rebecca's arms, she couldn't use it, and by the time she

could turn her halberd behind her, the knives would have already hit her back. If she got away from Rebecca, it was possible for her to evade the knives. However, in exchange, Rebecca would end up being set free. Perhaps at the instant she were to release her, Rebecca might attack Riku with her sword.

“Bye-bye.”

Rebecca slipped out a smile.

But the knives didn't reach Riku. The knives that seemed they would hit Riku's back were deflected. With a metallic noise, the knives fell to the ground in vain.

“Hey, it would be a problem if you forget I'm here.”(おっと)

The one that protected her back from the knives was Vrusto. And after that, he swung his sword aiming for Kurumi.

“Sorry, but your opponent is me.”

“Tch, get out of my way.”

Like a illusionist, she threw her knives at Vrusto as to disrupt his pace. While lightly deflecting the knives with his sword, he was gradually closing in to Kurumi in a steady manner.

“Stupid. Is there even anyone that would get out of your way just because you said so?”

With his sword, Vrusto slashed at Kurumi. And then, her arm was cut off and flew to the air. After raising a high-pitched cry, she groaned. With blood spraying off from her arm, the blood fell to the ground, taking a shape that looked as if there were many red caterpillars.*1

“Ku-kurumii!!”

Under Riku, Rebecca was screaming. Her face didn't show the anger or the smile from before. What it was showing right now was fear. Looking at such Rebecca, Riku clicked her tongue in discomfort.

“That voice; it’s too annoying.”

“N-nooo!! He-help me, Ro-...”

Rebecca wasn’t able to finish her words to the end. With her halberd, Riku cut off Rebecca’s head. Her wheat colored hair was now dyed in blood. Without caring about the hair being soaked in blood, Riku picked up the head.

“Have your mouth shut for eternity.”

Saying only that, she looked at Vrusto’s direction. Kurumi wasn’t able to hold a sword any longer. Even though she still had some things similar to grenades hidden, because she didn’t have arms anymore, she couldn’t use them. Without her being able to resist anymore, finishing her off was easy. But Vrusto didn’t kill her yet.

”Really, what are you doing?”

After glaring at Vrusto, she lightly swung her halberd, sending Rebecca’s blood that was at her halberd flying. She was going toward Kurumi, who was doing her drama at the ground.*2 But Vrusto stopped her.

“Don’t kill her, ojou-chan.”

“...What are you talking about?”

She wondered if she had heard correctly. Because she had been together with Vrusto for these ten years, she knew his personality. Vrusto should have been angry at Kurumi’s actions. That’s why she had no idea why Vrusto still didn’t kill her. Riku pointed the axe-blade of the halberd towards Kurumi.

“This is one is guilty, you know? Didn’t she by herself declared she had connections to Rook Barusak and also tried to kill us? Or what? Is it because she flattered you that you don’t want to kill her?”

“Stupid, there is no way it is that.”

Vrusto plainly declared. His eyes were unusually cold.

“Try to think. This guy is from the intelligence division. There is a need to investigate what information she leaked to the spiritualists or whether there are other traitors around.

“That...It is like that, but...”

Riku hanged her head down a little.

She understood what Vrusto meant.

Kurumi wasn't a spiritualist, but from the demon lord army. And what's more, she was from the intelligence division, which worked with varied secret information. In result of the leaked information, that recent battle took a complete different shape from what it should have been. And besides, there might be other demons that has connections to spiritualists besides Kurumi. It wasn't Riku's job to meddle in this case, but the job of an interrogator.

“...But if she is going to die anyway, then it doesn't matter if she dies here.”

Riku muttered while biting her lips.

She just couldn't leave a demon that had connections to spiritualists, and moreover, to the Barusak, alive. Even if she were to mow her down, smash her and cut off all of her limbs, it wouldn't be enough.

But even Riku knew she shouldn't do it.

“Control yourself, ojou-chan. Taking this guy prisoner is for the sake of the army... For the sake of captain Leivein.”

Vrusto put his hand at Riku's shoulder. He was putting a strength that felt like his claws that would often be used to cut people would sink in her skin. It was as if he was straining himself to hold an unbearable anger back. Vrusto also must

have wanted to kill her right away, but he was desperately enduring it. Riku quietly looked at him.

“...That’s right. The information she leaked might affect the captain in the future.”

“That’s the case.”

After Riku lowered down her halberd, Vrusto released his hand from Riku.

“Then, after we deliver this guy to Roppu, let’s rethink on our plan to invade that residence.

Vrusto went back to his usual tone of voice. Riku was finally able to wholeheartedly agree with his suggestion.

“Now that I remember, I’m actually a bit worried where that ladder goes to...”

“Is that so? But let’s go back for now.”

“Also, since it will be a pain to carry her, shouldn’t we also cut off her legs?”

Upset about the situation, she looked at Kurumi.

“...k...Do.”

Perhaps because it was hurting so much, she was mumbling random things out of pain. Because it was too muddled, it wasn’t possible to know what she was saying.

“Yes, that’s right. But, shit, I completely forgot. Stop her bleeding. If she ends up dying, there would be no meaning to it.”

“I know that.”

Riku approached Kurumi.

After she got close to her, she started to hear more clearly about what she was mumbling about. Riku was very annoyed by that. While she was hoping that Kurumi would lose her

consciousness, right at the moment when she was next to her...

“...I will do it. For Rook... will. ...For Rook’s sake, I will kill everyone.”

Riku noticed. She saw that inside Kurumi’s clothes, there were many explosives attached closely to one another.

“That’s bad!”

A bad feeling went through her. Because Kurumi didn’t have arms anymore, there were no signs of her activating the bombs. But there was still the possibility of something unexpected happening. Throwing away her halberd, as if to get away from Kurumi, Riku pushed Kurumi away from her.*3

“I’m sorry, Rook.”

But Riku was one step late. While having tears flowing from her eyes, she clenched her teeth. In that instant, crossing both of her hands to protect herself, she received the shockwave. But this much wouldn’t be enough. Right at the moment she prepared to be sent flying by the explosion, everything was already over.

All sounds had been drown out by the thunderous explosion and white light completely covered her eyesight.

-
1. Uhh... 血を飛び散らせながら、地面を芋虫のように転がった。
 2. It’s written ->たうちまわる<-, but I think it was meant to be ->立ち回る<-. Also, I’m not sure if my translation is correct there.
 3. Not sure if this is supposed to mean that Riku pushed Kurumi away, but I couldn’t think of anything else. ->クルミの身体から爆弾を取り除こうと手を伸ばした。<-

Chapter 25

Vermilion World

Under the cold weather with the sky full of twinkling stars, Roppu Nezaarand was leaning forward.

Timidly looking at the entrance of the underground corridor, he was eagerly waiting for Riku and Vrusto to come back. Since they had gone in there, a good amount of time have already passed. But even so, there were no changes to the residence where Charlotte is at, nor there were any signs of them coming back.

“Uu... I wonder if they are alright. Maybe... It might be good if I go in too? But it goes against the orders.”

Roppu was indecisive.

It would be weird if he were to go at the place Riku and Vrusto were invading. His hearing and leg strength were excelling even within the demon lord army. But he couldn't follow after smell just like Vrusto could. There wouldn't be any marks remaining so that he could reach to them and he didn't feel like he would be able to follow after them by himself.

“I guess I should wait a little more so I can think about what to do.”

It was right at the moment he let out a sigh.

Suddenly, the ground shook. After a thundering sound similar to the one of an explosion, there was the sound of something crumbling down, both coming from the entrance of the underground corridor.

“Eh, eh!?”

Roppu looked at the entrance in panic. But unfortunately, it

was too dark, hence he couldn't see anything. Guessing from the sound from before, it didn't look like what crumbled down had actually been something around him.

But because something had crumbled down, there was a high chance that Riku and Vrusto were in danger. Unsteadily, he was giving a few steps back.

"T-this... I need to report it to lieutenant colonel Foster!"

Roppu ran through the path they had took to come there before. This case was an "unexpected incident", which was what Riku told him to be attentive to. Because they got involved in a problem, he needed to let a superior officer to be aware of it. Taking much less time than the amount they took when they were being guided by Kurumi before, Roppu got back to the inn.

And then... He became speechless of the scene happening in front of the inn. The stone floor there was dyed in blood. The air was filled with the smell of blood. Not having the composure to think of closing his nose, he could only be in shock from the tragedy that was in front of his eyes.

"W-what in the world...Happened."

He muttered that in surprise. And right at that moment, the sound of footsteps were coming close to him from behind. Roppu turned back as if trying to protect himself from what would come, but it was already too late. That person had closed the distance between them enough to easily touch Roppu.

With cold eyes, the person looked at the trembling Roppu. And clenching the first that was holding that sword dripping blood...

At the underground corridor, there was a mountain of

rubble.

Because of the shockwave of the explosion, part of the walls and the ceiling crumbled down. The corridor was now filled with dust and the smell of blood. The figure of Kurumi, who was at the center of the explosion, was no more to be seen. Only the knives she used were meaninglessly lying on the ground.

Vrusto crawled out of the pile of rubble that had accumulated on his back.

“Really, she was bluffing even at her last moments. Why would she blow up all of the sudden... Did she put something at her teeth for that?”

Vrusto mildly coughed. Through his whole body, many fragments of the rubble pierced him and the wounds made by that were bleeding. Demons were more resilient than humans, but if one was to directly receive an explosion, there would be danger of dying. Maybe because of lack of blood, his eyesight was slightly trembling. Vrusto clicked his tongue loudly.

“Hey, get a grip.”

After he got out of the rubble, he extended his hand to the place he was buried before. While complaining, he was drawing Riku out of the rubble. At that moment the white light of the explosion filled the whole place, using his sense of smell, he ran to where Riku was sent flying. Riku had a superhuman strength that was comparable to demons, but her body was still the body any human would have. Being caught by an explosion from very close, it wasn't strange that she would be sent flying. For her to have her body intact was close to a miracle.

While slapping her cheek, Vrusto muttered.

“Hey, ojou-chan? Are you still alive?”

“...More or less.”

Riku opened her eyes slightly. Because Vrusto had protected her, she had less superficial wounds than expected. But even so, she was badly hurt. The moment she tried to pick up the halberd that was lying on the floor, pain went through her head.

“...gh.”(.....つ、)

Right at the center of her head, there was a ringing pain. Riku lightly pressed her right hand on her head. Touching it, she noticed that the back of her head was swelled. Perhaps when she was blown away by the explosion, she had violently hit her head on the wall. Maybe it was just the feeling, but she was slightly nauseous.

“Are you alright?”

“...If it is only this much, there is no problem.”

Picking up her halberd, she leaned on it like a staff. Then, as if she remembered something, she looked at Vrusto.

“Thank, you.”

“Stupid, it’s my duty. Duty. My babysitting still continues.”

Vrusto had his usual tone, but he wasn’t hiding his complete exhaustion. Riku gave a wry smile.

“I’m already seventeen.”

“By me, you are still a brat... Now, what should we be doing, ojou-chan.”

Riku was whipping her head to work.

By how loud the sound of the explosion was, it was certain that the spiritualists noticed it. They should assume that soon they would investigate about it, and then get to where they are. If it was her usual self, she would have been able to immediately kill them all, but at her current condition, she was

a bit anxious about fighting. If it was only one or two people, she would be able to win. However, if it was more than that... If there were more, she didn't know whether she could do it.

Besides that, at this condition, fighting Rook Barusak was impossible.

Although with all the issues, he was someone she had lived under the same roof for seven years. Riku knew very well Rook's talent. In order to confront the Barusak genius that would only appear once every one thousand years, she had to have her body condition in perfect state. He wasn't an opponent that could be so easily defeated with her body being in such bad condition.

"It's frustrating, but... We are pulling back."

"Understood."

Riku and Vrusto started walking. The path they came from was blocked. Since it couldn't be helped, they could only look for another way to the surface. No matter how much they walked, they couldn't find the exit. Gradually, her headache worsened and the feeling of nausea welled up. Desperately bearing all this, she kept moving her feet.

How long has she been walking? By the time she didn't know anymore how many times she had turned to another corridor, Vrusto stopped his feet. With a serious expression, his nose diligently moved.

"Sorry... Ojou-chan, keep walking straight to this way."

"What's the matter?"

"Ah... It's just that it looks like I dropped something captain gave me to look after. I will go back pick it up in just a moment. Ojou-chan should just keep going forward. What, I will catch up right away."

Giving a silly smile, Vrusto ran back to the way they came

from. All happened very fast, so Riku could only keep standing still motionless, glaring at direction Vrusto went to.

“Liar.”

After muttering that, she forced her weighting feet to turn back.

She didn't hear anything about Leivein entrusting Vrusto with something. He most likely noticed with his nose the presence of spiritualists. If it was to become a fight against the spiritualists, then Riku, who was wounded, would only be a hassle.

For some reason, she didn't have the feeling that Vrusto was using Riku as a bait so that he could run away to safety.

Vrusto was probably standing in the spiritualists way to buy time for Riku to run away. Perhaps this was just that he doing that for Riku to run away as an officer of higher ranking, and it being only the extension of his “babysitting”. She wasn't able to get a grasp of Vrusto's intentions, but at least, if she was at his place... She would choose to let Vrusto run away and go fight the spiritualists.

Slowly, little by little, Riku was getting back to the path they came from. And then, she had heard a deep sound of something clashing that had no comparison.

A thick voice full of anger and metallic sounds resounded from the depths of the corridor ahead. Tightly holding her halberd, she hurried her feet. It was clear that further at the next corridor, there was a battle happening. Running through the other side halfway, it was possible to see the death bodies of spiritualists at the ground. There were five, six spiritualists lying at the floor with blood flowing from them. There were some that were twitching, making one wonder if they were still breathing.

But there were others that were still standing. Three

spiritualists pointed their swords to Vrusto, who was full of wounds. Vrusto was fighting against three spiritualists by himself. He had a spear stuck at his body and a sword pierced through from his back, but even so, he still held his sword tightly.

“Shit, this is a tough one. This savage demon!!”

“As if I would let you by that easily!!”

Wielding his sword, he charged to one of the spiritualists. But, maybe because of his wounds, comparing to how he usually was, his moves were dull. Being hit by the spear, his sword flew to the air. Losing the weapon he is skilled at, Vrusto was surrounded by the three spiritualists.

But even so, Vrusto kept fighting. Clenching his fists, he glared at the three spiritualists. Right at the moment he bended forward his back as to go break through the encirclement, he stopped moving right away. From where Riku was standing, she was able to notice that Vrusto’s nose moved.

“That’s the end! Demon!”

The spiritualists brandished their swords from three sides at Vrusto, which had stopped moving.

But Vrusto was showing a fearless smile.

“Stupid. The ones that are finished are you guys.”

Together with these words, mustering her strength, Riku kicked the ground. She leaped in direction of the spiritualists. And then, aiming for that defenseless back, she swung her halberd down.

“Hello, spiritualists.”

While slashing at the back of that spiritualist, she muttered in a small voice. The spiritualist that was suddenly attacked had

the expression of shock on his face. Riku cut off his torso, sending it flying.

“Wha? Another one!?”

By Riku’s intrusion, the spiritualists had their encirclement broken. As to protect Vrusto, she went to the front of the spiritualists.

“Hey, brat. You... Why didn’t you do as I told you?”

“...This is giving false reports to a superior officer. I hate lies.”

Saying that, she pressed her halberd down at the ground. In fact, just for her to keep standing, Riku was already giving her all. The intensity of her headache worsened; if she were to stop paying attention, she would have probably collapsed. But even so, Riku held her halberd.

“Anyhow, if I were to run away like that, they would have caught up. Besides, something like being chased by spiritualists... Just by that my nausea gets worse.”

Saying only that, she forced herself to move her body.

The spiritualists were taking distance from Riku, but Riku wouldn’t let them run away. Pressing the halberd at his bosom, Riku horizontally swung it. With the halberd deeply gorging at his belly, the spiritualists fell down on his back.

“Ho-how dare you! You red head!”

The remaining spiritualist shouted something, but what he shouted... Riku didn’t hear. From the pain and the nausea, Riku’s consciousness began to become hazy. After bending her body to deflect the sword that was thrust at her, aiming at the spiritualist’s head, she dropped down the big lump of metal her halberd was. With his scared expression, his head was crushed more easily than a fruit would. Liquid similar to the red juice of a watermelon poured upon Riku.

“With that... Would this be the end?”

At the that she muttered that, she had already went over her limits. Crumbling down, she sank in the sea of blood. With a splash, she fell to the ground. By that time, it had become difficult even to slightly move her finger.

Even so, Riku was mustering strength to somehow get up. She didn't have the time to be lying down at such place. She needed to stand up as fast as possible, get out of that place together with Vrusto and meet with Roppu. And then, she needed to rethink of a plan to defeat Rook. Riku was forcefully trying to raise her eyelids.

As she did that, inside her vermillion colored world, she saw a pair of white shoes that particularly stood out.

“Thank goodness... You were still alive, Riku Barusak-sama.”

The woman wearing white clothes was looking down at Riku. Overall, her body was slim, and she felt like she was the purest thing Riku ever saw. The woman, who had her eyes closed, extended her hand to Riku. And then, she muttered in a way that seemed somehow apologetic.

“Nice to meet you. I am Shibira... I am your ally.”

Chapter 26

Shibira

Where would here be?

Seeing the different ceiling, Riku vacantly wondered where she was.

She felt something cold and soft touching her forehead. Reaching it out by moving her heavy arms, she noticed that it was a towel. Different from the cold and uncomfortable to sleep beds she usually slept on, she had been sleeping on a soft and clean white bed.

After slowly turning to the side, she saw Vrusto sitting on a wooden chair. He had his arms crossed and eyes shut. Having had his wounds treated, his whole body was covered with bandages. Right now, rather than a wolf demon, he looked more like a sleep-talking mummy.

“...Why... am I...?”

Here it wasn't the garrison of the Dragon Demon Division she had got used to live at, nor was it the room of some fortress. What that room most looked like would be a room of the Barusak residence, but as far as she was concerned, the room here had furniture of much higher quality than there, and overall, it brought about a calming mood.

“Hm... Oh, ojou-chan, were you awake?”

By of Riku's voice, Vrusto opened his eyes. Perhaps he hadn't been sleeping, but only had his eyes shut. Vrusto showed a face that seemed to be of relief.

“After that had happened, ojou-chan lost your consciousness. It's really good that you woke up.”

“...Lost consciousness?”

Vague memories flooded her mind.

After she arrived at Derufoi city, she went around the town together with Charlotte, and then, the one who appeared in front of her...

“That’s right, Rook!”

After saying that as she jumped to her feet, she was completely woken up.

In order to encounter with Rook, she went after Charlotte. However, their guide, Kurumi, was in fact a traitor, and because of all that happened, it ended up that she self-exploded. Because of that, Riku got severe wounds such as when she hit her head very hard, and after killing the spiritualists that went after them, she reached her limits. And right before she had lost consciousness, the last thing she saw was...

“It is very good you have woken up.”

Coming from close to Vrusto, Riku heard a gentle voice.

The woman who was on every point white was giving a smile to her. She had her whole body covered in a cloth so white one would hesitate on touching and had a silk like white hair that extended to her back. That woman that had her eyes shut tight opened her well formed lips.

“Let me give my self-introduction once again. I am Shibira. I work at the shrine at Derufoi city. It’s an honor to meet you, Riku Barusak-sama.”

Shibira extended her hand to Riku.

At that moment, she was about to take her hand, but she stopped midway. Following that, the hand Riku had extended took the cloth that was covering her own forehead. Narrowing

her eyes, she started inspecting the cloth. She didn't have the confidence on the knowledge she had about that, but if she were to sell that at the market, she would get silver coins for that. She suddenly felt it was unbelievable that cloth of such quality was used simply to cool down her head. Riku couldn't decide whether all this was truly the woman having goodwill of her and whether there were anything behind the scenes.

"Is that yours?"

"Yes. I am your ally after all."

"Hmph, is it really so?"

Vrusto said bluntly as if he was spiting out these words. Sitting between Riku and her, Vrusto was glaring at the woman full of disdain.

"I am grateful for treating our wounds, but all this is suspicious. ...I don't really want to think about it, but are you really not thinking about just getting our gratitude so that you can get something in exchange? Or maybe, you want us to get careless and then kill us."

But even though Shibira was receiving words that were almost like threats from Vrusto, her expression didn't change. Riku thought about Kurumi, but that was different from that false smile Kurumi had before. If one were to say, that expression would be like a frozen lake at winter in the center of a deep forest. Being completely silent, she looked at the direction of both Vrusto and Riku.

"If you were to remain at that place, Riku Barusak-sama, and you as well, would end up dying.Even if you were to remain alive after all that, you would eventually get hunted down by the Buryuccer spiritualists, and so, we wouldn't be able to talk right now. Therefore, I lead you here to this shrine so that I could have the opportunity to talk to you."

Shibira gently moved her hand as if to appease them.

“I do not have a sword on me. There is no such thing hidden in this place either. But you do possess weapons. ...With your smelling capability, it should be possible to know there are no spies or guards around this place.”

“ ... ”

Riku checked Vrusto's reaction. Guessing from his face, it seems it was as Shibira had said. The gorgeous cloths she were wearing also made the shape of her body stand out. It didn't look like she was hiding a dagger or anything else. Of course, it also didn't look like she had bombs attached to her body like Kurumi did.

“Why do you need to talk to me?”

After Riku spoke those words, Vrusto protested with a “Hey!”. However, she ignored him. Although her body hadn't completely recovered, it was much better than the time she was still at the underground passage. Not only her headache had lessened, but she didn't feel nauseous anymore. If she were to look around, it would be possible to see the halberd she would always use next to her bed. If it was that Shibira who didn't possess any weapons, butchering her would be easily done.

If she were to tell lies, it would be enough to simply not listen to her.

“Yes. In fact, I need to talk to the other you.”

“To the other me?”

Riku frowned.

Vrusto looked at her almost as if he was already saying “What are you even talking about?”. Riku shook her head. She was only Riku Barusak, and was nobody else. She had the feeling she had heard talks about her having a split personality before, but Riku wasn't the owner of such rare characteristic.

“What are you talking about?”

“I see... Then as expected, she really had been eaten.”

Shibira, for the first time had shown a sad expression.

“Had been eaten?”

“No, please, forget about what I said. It can't be restored anymore.”

Shibira wanted to bring an end to the topic. But by doing that, it only made Riku get more interested instead. Leaning her body forward by quite a bit, Riku glared at Shibira.

“What did you mean by “had been eaten”?”

“I cannot see the reality. In exchange for that, I can see the future.”

Saying that, Shibira put her right hand above her eyes.

The information Keity Foster had told her was being revived at the back of her mind. Unconsciously, Riku snorted together with a smile.

“I've heard about it. I don't believe in unchangeable future though.”

“Yes, the future I see is not unchangeable. But it is a future that has high chances of occurring. Even at this moment right now, the future is constantly changing. The future I can see is only the most possible occurrence only considering the present. The decisions of people might change, but also might not change.”

Shibira was showing a smile that vaguely had the feeling of sorrow on it. Perhaps, how she is talking to them at this moment is nothing more than a scene she had already seen. Perhaps, it is different from the scene she had seen. But to Riku, who couldn't see the future, such things didn't matter.

“And then? Does this have anything to do with the thing you

said that had been eaten?”

“Yes. In fact, ten years ago, I... I foresaw the future which I gave my prophecy to the two Riku Barusak. To the other Riku Barusak that was sleeping inside you. But the situation of the day of that future had changed. The future you brandished your sword as a spiritualist to the future you brandished your sword for the demons.”

“Ten years ago? What, was it about that?”

Riku lost interest in an instant.

If it was only this much, it was possible to know after investigating a bit. The fact Riku was thrown away was made a secret to the public. The official announcement should have been death by illness. But she being thrown away was already taken for granted, and there wasn't much need to investigate anything about it.

Of course, for them to investigate to the point of knowing she had been recruited by the Demon Lord army would prove to be a very prolonged work. But even so, it wasn't like it wouldn't be impossible. If a red haired human surnamed Barusak was to stand out, people would immediately notice it was Riku.

“This kind of thing can be known just by investigating. The useless myself that was aiming to be a spiritualist was thrown away... And became another myself. It would be something like that, right?”

The reason why nobody knew about Riku like Toudo did was simple.

Nobody had any interest about Riku after what happened. The fate of some useless kid being thrown away from the cliff; such a thing wasn't worth investigating. It was all there was to it.

“Thank you, it is enough. Thank you for treating our

wounds.”

She felt appreciation for the acts Shibira did for them.

Even though they were from the Demon Lord Army, it didn't seem like anything in particular would happen because of that. Guess from her words and from the details of why she had saved them, she could reach the conclusion that for Shibira to treat their injuries was something to be grateful of. If she was to leave them at the underground passage, they would be attacked by spiritualists and both of them would get disposed of. Riku couldn't understand why she wanted her way to even treat the injuries of people she didn't even know.

More than anything, her smile wasn't like the false smile Kurumi had before. Shibira was only a very silent and honest shrine maiden.*1

“...Is that so?”

“Yes. Sorry, but I'm already leaving. I need to meet with Roppu... Meet with a friend soon. Could you guide us to the exit?”

Standing up, Riku put the halberd on her back. After hanging the silver sword at her waist, she gave a glance to the perplexed Vrusto and walked to the exit. To Riku's actions, from behind Riku, Shibira's words came to her.

“I understand. I will guide you to the exit. However, please, let me say only this. Riku Barusak will not live to the next winter.”

1. I'm not sure if using shrine maiden would be a proper translation.

Chapter 27

An Idealistic Future

...Riku Barusak won't live to the next winter.

By the words that couldn't be ignored, Riku stopped her feet.

But she didn't look back. From the mood that was telling the severity of the situation and Shibira's tone of voice, the case could only be described by the word "serious". In other words, it was something that Shibira had seen in the future. Letting out a small sigh, while still looking at the door, Riku asked Shibira.

"...Is that so? Incidentally, could there be any way to avoid this?"

"I don't know. But if I were to say the way that would certainly solve this problem, it would be leaving the Demon Lord army."

From Shibira's answer, Riku burst out with laughter. She knew that Shibira was seriously answering her question. But that's exactly why there was no way he wouldn't start laughing.

"That's impossible."

After still having her smile on for a while, she opened the door. At the other side of the door, there was a corridor with a floor made of stone. Because it was nighttime, the moonlight coming from the window was shining at the dimly dark floor. Riku slowly looked back. The room was filled with the mild light and Shibira looked like she was being basked in light. Once again, Shibira extended her hand to Riku.

"If you have nowhere to go, I can shelter you in this shrine. Once all of this cool down, you can dye your hair and be

introduced to the society. I can give you my hand on that.”

That hand was filled with good will. But Riku shook her head. While lightly raising her right hand, she went off to the dark corridor.

“Thank you. But I need to decline. ...Let’s go, second lieutenant Vrusto.”

“Hey, wait a sec!”

Riku started walking through the corridor. Each of her footsteps echoed.

“...If you go straight through this corridor, you should arrive at the exit. May you have good fortune, Riku Barusak.”

Both the sound of Vrusto hurriedly following after her and Shibira’s calming voice resounded from behind. Just like Shibira had said, as she narrowed her eyes, she noticed there was a wooden door at the end of corridor.

“Ojou-chan, is it really fine?”

After catching up to Riku, Vrusto whispered to her. Vrusto had a weird expression on his face. To Vrusto’s weird expression, Riku leaned her head to the side.

“What is really fine?”

“Ah, what to say... Wouldn’t it be better to do as Shibira told you? If you leave the Demon Lord army, the thing about you being able to extend your lifespan. Your death doesn’t seem like it will be because of illness or something like that.”

“Ah, you were talking about that.”

Riku loosened her lips.

If she were to leave the Demon Lord army, she would be able to get away from the future she dies. In other words, her death that would happen within this year would most likely be at war. What kind of place, how, who was the person who killed

her; such things she didn't know. All she knew was that if the future Shibira had seen became true, then Riku would die at battle.

"Of course, I don't plan on dying."

"But if you keep in the Demon Lord army..."

"Don't make me say the same thing again."

Riku glared at Vrusto. A force that was as if he had a halberd pointed right next to his neck went through his body.

"I will fight for captain until my last moment. Besides... There is no way I can throw everything away for a future that might not really happen."

As she had said that, they arrived at the front of the old wooden gate.

The future Shibira had talked about wasn't anything more than a future that had high chances of coming true in the end. Maybe by leaving the Demon Lord army, she would be able to get away from the future she dies, but if she were to do the, the conviction of Riku Barusak would die. Rather than living the rest of her life by killing her own conviction, she would rather stick with it to the end.

Perhaps this was only idealistic. Perhaps the path which she would live on was the correct choice. But even if her body was still living, if her heart was dead, there would be no meaning to it. Only this conviction she wouldn't let anyone decide for her.

"I will decide my own future."

After closing her mouth tight, she pushed the wooden gate.

— — —

The house of the lord that governed Derufoi city was a very big house.

With many unused rooms, the effort to keep all of them

clean was very regrettable. But no matter which influential person's residence it was, there would always be a dirty room.

An underground room full of cells locked by a key would be the most usual example. Inside the place filled with the stench and with many torture instruments and skeletons around, Charlotte was lying at the floor. She still wasn't subjected to torture, but soon enough they would start to do it so that she would blurt out crucial information of the Demon Lord army.

"This disgrace... There is no way I can accept that."

Charlotte was biting her lips.

Her older brother, who was an influential figure for being the demon lord, was suddenly sealed away, and without knowing about anything, she became the demon lord substitute. Sitting at the throne her older brother was sitting a few days ago and giving orders to his subordinates felt very uncomfortable.

Getting used to the position of demon lord substitute, for these two hundred years she had been preparing for the unsealing of her brother... She had been killing off her feelings and working for the sake of the Demon Lord army. Of course, sometimes she would take a breather, but this was all there was to it. She was always aiming to be what one would expect of someone that was the younger sister of the demon lord. The first time she went against it... The result was that.

It was different from the forced gentleness of her subordinates... The gentleness that boy approached her with was just as if it was of her beloved older brother. She was embarrassed that she had fallen in love with the boy even if it was a bit. Because of that, many of the elite of the Demon Lord army were killed.

"...This is a punishment."

It was a punishment that felt out of reality. Tears were flowing off her eyes. The moment the pearl like tear that was

flowing through her cheek fell to the ground...

“Sorry, I got a bit late on coming to save you.”

With a clatter, the gate of the cell opened. Charlotte’s eyes were wide-open. At the other side of the gate, the spiritualist boy that had been gentle to her was there. Showing a wry smile, the boy rushed over to Charlotte.

“What are you doing!?”

“It took much effort to calm down Cellia. But as expected... I think killing you is wrong.”

The silver haired boy untied the rope binding her without hesitations. And then, he gently lifted Charlotte, who had been sitting at the floor, into his arms. Because of the words overflowing with gentleness, Charlotte trembled.

“Why... You, you are a spiritualist, aren’t you?”

Charlotte asked him while sobbing.

Something such as a spiritualist saving a demon was completely unheard of. In fact, all of her escorts were all... Were all exterminated by Cellia Buryuuser. Also many other demons were killed by other spiritualists. Her brother was sealed only because they couldn’t kill him. There was no way a spiritualist would be gentle to a demon. It was obvious there was something behind the scenes.

But the silver haired boy said with a gentle voice.

“Yes... I’m a spiritualist. But I don’t see you as a wicked demon.”

These words went straight to her heart.

They were words that were gentle on all points and weren’t two-faced. Charlotte felt her cheeks, and then her whole body warm up. Her heart that had been filled with his affection was dominating her.

“I... I want to change the current state of the relation of demons and spiritualists. That’s why...”

I want you to lend me your strength. I want you to live.

The moment these words left the boy’s lips, a thundering sound shook the ground.

Yes, it was the sound of Kurumi self-exploding underground.

But while Charlotte obviously didn’t know about that, nor did the boy. Clearly, both of them were surprised by the sudden thundering sound and tremor.

“Wh-what was that!?”

“Eh, earthquake? Was there earthquakes in this world? Even though there should have been no way for an earthquake to happen at this timing!!”

The boy’s face crumbled.

Charlotte was staring at the boy puzzled. Looking at how the boy was panicking at the unexpected event made one want to laugh. Even though she had been thinking he was the type of person that would always be completely calm, she had ended up seeing another side of him.

It was very different to the attitude of a saint... It was obviously a reaction more suited to his age.

“Wh-why are you laughing?”

“Although I was thinking you were like a kind saint before, right now I can only think of you as nothing more than a human.”

With Charlotte laughing at him, his face suddenly became red. Of course, this would be because of his embarrassment. It was as if there was steam raising from his face to the point of even making a sound.

“Th-that’s rude. I am a human to begin with.”

“That’s right. Humans are humans. And demons are demons.”

“Y-yes, that’s right. But, for it to be segregated like that... I really don’t think it is good.”

Clearing his throat as if to start his talk again, the boy held Charlotte’s hands. And then, as if he had chose his words, he spoke.

“Please. I’m a human, and you are a demon, but... If you cooperate with me, we can make a world everyone can smile. Please, lend me your strength!!”

Charlotte showed a wry smile at his childish ideal.

If it was the words of the saint like boy from a few moments ago, perhaps she would have agreed to him without saying anything. But the child like boy’s immature words didn’t make her heart move.

A world where everyone can smile was indeed fabulous. It was the world she and her elder brother would always dream of. But once she sat down at the throne, she noticed something. Reality and ideals are different. In order to accomplish something, somebody would need to be hurt. In the end, all that was no more than an ideal she would dream of when she was a kid.

“If it was that easy to build a world of peace, nobody would be suffering by now.”*1

Bluntly refusing him, she declared.

1. What is that ->そう簡単に平和な世界が築けたら、誰も苦勞はせんよ<- ; - ; No matter how much I looked for it, I couldn’t find D:. Because I’m not really sure what this is supposed to mean, I didn’t put anything there, otherwise, it would take too long-.-

Chapter 28

Losing the Grip

Charlotte picked up the sword that was lying at the floor next to her.

Its tip was rusty, but it wasn't to the point of being something to be concerned about. While lightly swinging the sword a few times, she exchanged glances with the boy. The reason Charlotte took that sword was a extremely simple one. She was planning to defeat the boy in front of her eyes at once and get away from that city, and maybe along the way, she would throw away the rusted sword and get a new one. Seeing Charlotte getting in position to fight without any hesitations, the silver haired boy... Rook Barusak became confused and made a clatter.

“Eh, wait a second? What is all this!?”

“There is nothing to be inquired. It's impossible to save the world with your childish ideals. If it is for me to go do that, then rather than doing this together with you, unsealing onii-sama is a much closer path to peace!”

Charlotte's sword was pointing directly next to Rook's throat. He hesitantly moved his hand as if to put it over the sword, but if he were to resist with the sword only a few centimeters away from his neck, he would get his head removed.

“What is it? Why don't you try to take my sword away? Are you planning on dying?”

While saying that, she swung the rusty sword. While dodging the sword blow in his most earnest, he was desperately thinking.

In Rook's memories, there were no descriptions of an

earthquake happening. For the event to fail and Charlotte go attack him, it was only later on. However, even though he should have said the same words that were said in the game, Charlotte still went and attacked him. Because in the instant he drew his sword against Charlotte it would be the end of her route, he didn't use it. Unfortunately, Rook became unable to think on what he should do next.

“That's because there is no way I can point my sword to you!”

He didn't have the sadism to raise his hand against his beloved game character. Although she wasn't his favorite character, she still was among his first five favorite ones. Even before in the game, he didn't like to make the choices that would hurt her. While holding his feet from Charlotte's attacks, Rook was becoming desperate and tried to think on what he should do.

“What's the matter, brat? Won't you fight back?”

“That's... Because I don't want to hur...”

“You don't want to hurt me? Hmph, I have no interest in your childish ideals! Me and my onii-sama spent our life leading the Demon Lord army for these ideals too!! It's not some greenhorn brat that can be babbling about ideals!”

Together with these words, the strength of the swings were increasing. In Rook's forehead, sweat was flowing like a waterfall. No matter what, he wasn't able to go back to the saint-like himself. More than that, in this state, wasn't it already impossible to avoid the bad end? Only bad thoughts were going through his mind.

“You are losing your grip! You are full of openings, you brat full of immature ideals!”

Charlotte's attack grazed Rook's cheek. The sharp pain was felt at his cheek. Avoiding the next attack by a hair's breadth, Rook raised his voice.

“Whether it is childish or not, you won’t know if you don’t try!”

The voice full of sorrow resounded throughout the cell room. Hearing these words, Charlotte gave a bold smile.

“I can already know it even if I don’t try, brat.”

Charlotte hit the handle of the sword at Rook’s stomach with all her strength. Without being able to defend himself, all the air left his lungs in one go. Because of all the pain, Rook crouched down while holding his belly. Charlotte didn’t let that gap go by. After raising her sword, she swung it only to stop it next to his neck. While pondering about something, she looked at the groaning Rook. And then, after deciding something, she put the sword in her scabbard.*1

“...Experience the world more, brat. After that, I will hear your answer. After seeing how this world is, whether you will still be able to spill those naive ideals, I will be looking forward to it. That’s is if by that time... You aren’t dead already.”

Saying those words that were accompanied with a wry smile, she quietly left the place. Rook kept motionless for some time. Rather than because of the pain, it was because he was surprised by Charlotte’s words.

“...What is this?”

In the game, if he were to fail at this scene, he would have been killed.

But even though he should have failed, Charlotte left him alive.

Is this Charlotte’s love for me?

Is this Charlotte pitying me?

Was that something she did only on a whim?

“Really, I don’t know anymore!”

While holding his belly, he unsteadily left the vault. Even though it was the residence of the lord, Rook transformed it into a place full of spiritualists. It was as if just by walking a few steps, it was enough to encounter a spiritualist. In such place, there was no way Charlotte would be able to escape safely with her dragon horns.

“Please return safely, Charlotte-chan.”

“What’s the matter, Rook?”

The one that reacted to his murmurs was a girl who had a clump of hair bundled up right above her ear.*2 The owner of the voluptuous breasts that would make one unconsciously throw oneself onto them had both a very calming appearance and aura. But even so, she wasn’t someone that could be looked down upon by her appearances. That girl was the character that could be boasted of having the most fighting strength at the game, Celia Buryuser. Without giving any mercy to the demons, it was a force that was to the point of even being called [Buryuser cannon]. Of course, except for that, it was only the usual quiet and gentle heroine.

“Celia, say, did you see the demon that was here just a moment ago?”

“Demon?”

Her gentle eyelids raised a bit.

“Rook-kun is too kind. The demons are our enemies, you know?”

“But... She wasn’t a bad demon.”

“There is no such thing as being bad or good for demons. That’s right... I’ve just remembered something about demons. Actually, my excellent subordinates found an inn where demons were hiding.”

Celia’s cheek blushed in happiness. It was as if she was a

puppy waiting to be praised. But instead of doing that, it was like all blood left from Rook's face.

"Ce-cellia? And then, what... What happened to those demons?"

"Of course I ordered them to kill them all. About this time, the inn at the west side should be already dyed in blood. Of course, in demon's blood."

With a bright smile, she dropped down hell onto Rook.

In the game, except for a single person, all of Charlotte's escorts would have been killed. This single person was supposed to get in contact to the boss level demon Leivein Adlar that was at the garrison nearby and come to rescue Charlotte, or so Rook had the feeling this was how the story was supposed to develop. Unfortunately, he didn't know in details on how this single demon was able to get to Leivein. Most likely, the demon that was at the inn had the chance of about eight or nine out of ten of being acquainted with Charlotte. No, even more than that, if the information that all the demons had been annihilated got into Charlotte's ears, it would be a big problem.

Although just when he had just told her he wanted to cooperate with her for peace, with how this kind of thing ended up happening, Charlotte would have completely lost interest in his proposal.

"Ro-Rook-kun? What's the matter? Pe-perhaps, Rook-kun also wanted to go kill some demons?"

"It's not that though... Ahahahah."

He was showing an empty smile on his face. Right now, all he could do nothing but smile.

Cellia was anxious on how Rook was acting. She was wondering if she had said something weird to him. Rushing

over to the two of them, a spiritualist hurriedly came running.

“Re-reporting.”

Although it wasn't a spiritualist Cellia directly had command over, he had the Buryuuser crest on his armor.

But the spiritualist was trembling badly. It was possible to see that there were a little blood on his armor. It felt like it was spilled blood from a demon, but even so, a bad feeling went through Cellia's heart. But there was no way she could let the spiritualist there, and also Rook, know her inner worries. Cellia retained her usual gentle face.

“What's the matter?”

While patting the shoulder of the hopeless Rook, she asked.

And with that, the spiritualist answered her while still trembling.

“Y-yes! Actually... It has been reported that the spiritualists that went to the inn were annihilated!”

1. What? She had a scabbard? Wasn't it a rusty sword randomly lying around?
2. I have no idea what this hairstyle is supposed to be ;-; I thought about that chinese hairstyle which there are two balls of hair on the head 0.0 I hope it is not, because I'm racist against that hair D: ->豊かな髪を耳の上で束ねた少女だった<-

Chapter 29

The Army at the Back Street

Many lively sounds decorated Derufoi city.

Even with the day of the festival coming, the turmoil of the eve of the festival didn't calm down. In fact, because it was the festival day itself, all the liveliness had increased. Even the children not sleeping was overlooked at that day. Ignoring the previous demon invasion and putting off their work, all of them wanted to have fun in the festival that was at the front of their eyes. It was certainly a big event that would only happen once in the year.

That's why the townspeople of the city didn't notice.

There were some of them that were a bit uncomfortable and suspicious about the tremor that happened before, but it was all there was to it. Nobody did notice that at the shadows of the city, the battle between the demons and spiritualists was becoming even fiercer.

After Riku and Vrusto got out of the forest of the shrine, they went straight back to the inn.

Maybe it would have been fine for them to go back to the entrance of the underground passage, but if one were to think on how the spiritualists immediately got to the passage right after Kurumi self-exploded, then it is possible to conclude that most likely the sound of the underground passageway crumbling down was also heard at the surface. Roppu must have thought about coming back to the inn momentarily and entering in contact with Keity. That's why Riku and Vrusto were now running through a back street, heading towards the

inn.

“It looks like we will get to the inn faster than we thought.”

Vrusto let out a bold smile.

At this festival day, there would be nobody eccentric enough to be walking at the back streets. Even if there was someone there, it would be only people that had circumstances they couldn't tell to anybody. Therefore, even if there were a red haired girl carrying a halberd and a guy wearing a very well made wolf mask running around, nobody would batch a glance. Rather, they would all think that if they were to intervene, they would get troubles for that.

But there was no way everything would proceed that easily.

“Stop, you two there!”

Riku and Vrusto put up a face of someone that had nothing to do with it, but even so, they were called.

It was a searching party that was looking for Charlotte, who ran away. However, neither Riku or Vrusto cared about that. Doing a sign with her hand to tell Vrusto to step away, Riku gave one step forward.

“What?”

“We are spiritualists of Buryuuser. Right now, there is a demon that has escaped from our grasp. Just so we can confirm, could you remove your costumes?”

“Oh? You are suspecting us?”

Riku made a very displeased expression. The spiritualist that was the closest to Riku slowly took distance from her while having his hand on the handle of his sword. There were no signs of them loosening their guard. With both her hands not holding the sword or the halberd, she 手を広げて1* and approached him.

“That’s rude. I’m not a demon; I’m a human, you know?”

“...If that’s the case, why are you at a place like this at this time?”

“It’s just that all the turmoil became a bit too annoying. I only wanted to go to a quiet place.

Riku was playing dumb. The eyes of the spiritualists moved from Riku to Vrusto.

“This mask there is really very detailed.”

The spiritualists were glaring at Vrusto from head to toe. They were giving words of praise, but even so, the signs of caution on their eyes weren’t fading away at all. Rather, it looked like it became even stronger. Riku clicked her tongue inside her mind. Keity Foster’s arms and ears were those of a tiger, but her face was just like the one of a human’s. Therefore, back then, they left them without paying much mind. But Vrusto’s face was different from a human’s and was exactly like one of a wolf.

“Could you show it to me for a bit?”

While saying that, the spiritualist approached Vrusto. Vrusto didn’t answer to his question. When his hand got close enough that it would be possible to easily touch Vrusto, something in his sleeve shone. There was no way Vrusto would overlook that. In order to get some distance from the spiritualist, he was about to give one step back. But at that exact moment, with a knife that went out of his sleeve, the spiritualist attacked Vrusto.

“What are you doing!!”

Because the spiritualist got so close to him, there was no time for Vrusto to draw his sword or to avoid the attack. In that instant, Vrusto attacked with his claws. The sharp claws lightly deflected the knife. Having his knife sent flying, the spiritualist

jumped back, taking distance from Vrusto. And then, while showing a smirk, he drew his sword.

“Hmph, you showed your true colors, you demons!!”

“There is no way fake claws would send a knife flying!”

The mood of the back street that didn't have anything was now rising in tension. It was as if the air was getting denser, feeling like it was weighting down on the body. All the spiritualists got into a fighting posture.

“It can't be helped. I would want to avoid doing some unnecessary exercise though.”

“Really, spiritualists should also go get a break at festivals!”

Riku took the halberd in her hands and Vrusto drew his sword. Her headache and her feeling of nausea lessened, but she still didn't want to move too much. This was the same for Vrusto, who was covered in bandages. None of them were at vital spots, but his body was covered by wounds. Vrusto also wanted to avoid any pointless conflict. That's why he let the spiritualists do whatever they wanted, but it seems that the plan had completely failed. They were not able to avoid the battle.

“Let's start by you, little demon!”

The spiritualist that was the first to draw his sword went forward, aiming his sword at Riku. Sending the sword of the attacking spiritualist flying with a small movement, she cut his torso off, putting her strength onto the blow. His organs fell off from him and fell down at the paved street. Riku stepped on the organs that fell down on the ground.

“Without any greetings, you attacked us with a knife and even drew your swords... Do spiritualists know no manners?”

“Tch, somebody! Call reinforcements quickly!”

They were probably scared of how their comrade had died so easily. A spiritualist of high stature raised his voice as he was trembling. The person that took heed to his call quickly nodded. Turning his back, he ran to the depths of the street. But there was no way Riku would let them go call reinforcements.

“Naive.”

With her eyes shining, she kicked the ground with . As if to prevent Riku from attacking that spiritualist, the spiritualists stood on her way. Bending her body, she passed through them. In the perspective of the spiritualists, maybe that spiritualist was running fast, but in Riku’s perspective, it was so slow that filled her with boredom. In an instant, she caught up with him, and then, she whispered at the ear of the spiritualist that was desperately running.

“I won’t let you escape.”

“Hiii!”(ひいっ !)

The spiritualist raised a groan similar to that of a cornered monkey. Although he looked back with his eyes wide-open out of fear, he still kept going forward. It wasn’t because calling for reinforcements was his duty that he was running, but because of Riku herself. Without any hesitations, Riku swung down her halberd. The sharp axe-shaped blade of the halberd lodged at the spiritualist’s spinal cord. Stepping at the spiritualist that fell forward to the ground, she pressed her halberd onto the ground.

“Well then, who is next?”

As Riku muttered that, the expression of the spiritualists changed. There were already only three spiritualists left. Previously, they should have been thinking that if they were to surround Riku and attack her all at once, it would somehow work out. But in practice, Riku had already killed two people.

Not only that, there was still Vrusto, who clearly had the appearance of a demon, remaining. Saying that their chances of victory were hopeless wasn't exaggeration.

“...Sh-shit! Don't fear! In honor of the Buryuuser, we shall slay the enemy!”

But even then, the spiritualists got inspired. With that voice that was trembling to the point of being disgraceful being raised, their morale seemed to be rising up. Two of the spiritualists ran to Riku and the remaining one went to attack Vruto.

“I shall fulfill the resentment of our companions!”

“You damned red haired demon!”

While raising a battle cry, the two spiritualists charged at Riku. Riku's expression didn't change. She rotated her halberd at her hand as if all that was a bother. With the sound of the air being cut, as if he got scared because of that, the speed of one of the spiritualist dropped. But the other one didn't stop. With his eyes bloodshot, he rushed forward to Riku.

“Take this! The resentment of our dead comrades!”

“Ok. Then, goodbye.”

With a simple movement, she cut his head off. The body that had lost its head was spraying blood as if it was a fountain. While her cheeks were being soaked with the spilling blood, she got closer to the spiritualist that was frozen from fear.

“I-I'm sorry. Ple-please, sp-spare me!”

His sword dropped from his hand. While unsteadily stepping back, he started to beg for his life.

“I, I have a child! It's, it's only a baby that can't even stand up!”

Sweat was flowing down on the spiritualist's forehead.

Differently from the case of the spiritualist that attacked Riku with bloodshot eyes, perhaps this spiritualist was thinking about the face of his child that was at home right now. His expression, which showed he didn't want to die and wanted to run away, was filled with fear.

"If, if I don't come back, my family... My family will!!"

"Yes, very troublesome, right? That's why you want me to spare you?"

Riku's face became loose. Raising the corners of her mouth slightly, she was getting close to him. It was almost as if it was a smirk. The spiritualist thought there might still be hope for him to be saved. As if grasping hope that was like a single ray of light shining at the darkness, he extended his hands.

"I beg you... Spare me. I won't tell about you to anyone. So..."

"Don't wanna."

Riku sent the hand that was extended to her flying. The street was filled with a shriek full of pain and despair. Giving a glance to the face soaked in tears of the spiritualist, without a fragment of emotion, she swung down one more blow. The head that was sent flying fell inside the sea of blood. Looking at his eyes, which were wide-open in fear, she muttered to herself.

"Even though you took your sword, you weren't prepared to die? If you hold your life so precious, then it would have been better if you ran away to begin with."

"...Ojou-chan, so you are really worrying about what Shibira said."

Vrusto, who had already skewered the spiritualists, said to Riku in a worried tone. Riku cut him off.

"Don't make me tell you again. I don't have interest in something like prophecies."

Saying that, she wiped off the blood on her cheek. Having blood sticking to her was nasty. Riku began wanting to go to have a bath. Since their plan of saving Charlotte had been initiated, she didn't have the time to go have a bath. Thinking about that, she decided she should get to the inn as soon as possible. Lightly swinging her halberd and spilling blood from it, she started to walk.

"Let's go, second lieutenant Vrusto."

"...Understood... Wait, ojou-chan!"

It was right after the instant she stopped her feet from Vrusto's warning.

At the other side of the street, there were a huge amount of people pressing through. It was as like an army of housewives at a discount festival. If one were to look closely, it would be possible to see there was a little shadow at the front of that army that ran as if she was running away from them. It seems that the crowd of humans that were all holding swords were going after the small shadow running in front of them.

With the blonde hair that stood out even at night disheveled and holding a broken sword in her right hand, the shadow was running straight to Riku's direction. That figure was just like...

"Mu, captain! It's captain!! I want you to help me a little!"

As if saying "I finally found you", the eyes of that small shadow were sparkling. She was running straight towards Riku. Following behind her, there was that army full of killing intent. As expected, facing such unexpected situation, even Riku had her face twitching.

"Ch-charlotte!?"

She wouldn't be forgiven for running away.

Charlotte had an army of fifty spiritualists following after her.

-
1. I don't know how this pose is called. It would be like when you open your arms a bit when you want to complain about something.
 2. I don't know if it is talking about Riku running away from the situation or Charlotte escaping from the spiritualists. It is probably Charlotte, though. 逃げることは許さない。

Chapter 30

Reinforcements

“We are turning back, secound lieutenant Vrusto.”

And just like that, Riku was about to step back.

If it was ten or twenty people, she would be able to do it somehow. But right now, they were injured. They were able to deal with five people one way or another, but facing ten times this number was impossible. Their chances of winning were very low. With that kind of danger, they shouldn't face them at least at the moment.

“Wait, ojou-chan. Are you planning on abandoning the Demon Lord substitute-sama?”

Vrusto caught Riku's arm, who was about to leave the place. Riku wasn't able to see his face from her position, but his tone of voice was filled with anger.

“I'm not stupid enough to throw myself into a battle that is impossible to win.”

Riku shook of his arm.

She didn't care about Charlotte. Perhaps, if there were spiritualists from the Barusak among that army of people, the situation might have been different. However, the spiritualists that attacked them a few moments ago, the spiritualists they encountered underground and the spiritualists that came to the inn before were all from the Buryuuser. The possibility of there being a spiritualist of the Barusak there couldn't really be thought of. If that was the case, it would be better to retreat without fighting that army.

“But she is the top of the Demon Lord army, you know? If

you abandon her, it will cause trouble to the captain.”

“Trouble?”

In that instant, her heart trembled.

That hesitation greatly changed fate. In a blink of an eye, the wave-like army kept pressing through the streets. Riku and Vrusto were both engulfed by this wave.

The spiritualists that were overflowing with killing intent pointed their sword and spears forward without hesitation. With that, it was necessary for them to get ready to fight.

“Kill them! Kill the demons!!”

“For the honor of the Buryuuser! In the name of Cellia Romaneti Buryuuser!!”

“Kill! Kill! Kill!!”

While raising their battle cries, the spiritualists charged with their spears pointed forward. As she mowed down the spears, she was cutting heads off. The blood that flew off spilled even on the faces of the spiritualists that came rushing, but none of them wiped the blood off. They didn’t care about something like having blood sticking to the face. With eyes bloodshot and while getting soaked in the blood of their own comrades, they were aiming their spears and swords towards Riku.

“Without giving any greetings... For you to already come to kill me like that!!”

While clenching her teeth, Riku kept swinging her halberd. Drawing a circle around her in a swing, the spiritualists that were gathered close to her all had their torso cut off. There were someone’s intestines hanging at the axe-shaped blade of the halberd, but Riku didn’t have the time to shook it off. Right after that, a spiritualist charged at Riku with his spear, aiming very close to her neck.

“Tch, annoying!”

While sweeping her halberd at that spiritualist, Riku moved her gaze somewhere else.

Somewhere close to her, Vrusto was there swinging his sword. Having Charlotte against the wall and protecting her, the way he was desperately fighting perhaps could be considered admirable, with it being like an example to follow to other demons. Charlotte was also looking for a gap so that she could steal a sword from them. She was extending her hands and coming forward through any opening many times so that she could do that, but right after she would do that, many swords and spears would come at her, and so it wasn't going very well. Unfortunately, Charlotte didn't have the time to pick up a sword.

“Don't look away, red head!”

There was a spiritualist swinging down his sword from her back. Turning her body the other way around, she swung her halberd upwards. Being cut in a straight line diagonally, the spiritualist instantly died and fell down to the ground. As if spiritualists were flowing from his cut back, wielding their swords, they pressed forward through the body. No matter how many times she cut them down, there was no end to it. Their numbers should have been much less than the numbers of the Bistolru spiritualists at the Ren fort and Myuuz castle battles. But each of their individual strength was greater.

“For the sake of Cellia Romaneti Buryuuser-sama! We will kill the demon that escaped! And its companions!”

“Drop the hammer onto the cowardly demons that killed our comrades!!”

With many voices being raised, full of morale, they charged.

With no time to rest, Riku swung her halberd. But each time she deflected the spears and each time she defended herself

against the swords, little by little she was getting exhausted. The halberd she was holding was gradually getting heavier. As a result, her breathing was getting rougher.

Why did she need to fight for Charlotte's sake? Although the regret of not having retreated right away before was going through her head, she endured such feelings and drove them away. If she was unable to protect Charlotte, Leivein, who picked her up when she was about to die, would get bad reputation. Only that she wanted to avoid. While thinking that, she kept swinging her halberd.

"There are still, some left?"

Even after mowing down about twenty people, they were still full of vigor.

Even after cutting down thirty of them, the attacks wouldn't stop.

She had killed about forty by now. However, the number of people charging at her didn't decrease.

"Are their numbers, increasing?"

Maybe they had called for reinforcements.

Perhaps that was something that would obviously happen. The ones facing the fifty people full of bloodlust were only Riku and Vrusto, who were injured. Although it was a close fight, they were definitely reducing their numbers. If that was the case, it wouldn't be weird if someone was to call for reinforcements. Riku clicked her tongue.

"Today is really just like a nightmare!!"

As if to engulf her, many spiritualists came from above and swung their swords down. During this moment, a spear was thrust straight at her. Lightly jumping, after she got onto the spear, she drew her sword. Drawing the silver sword, she gorged the bosom of the spiritualist that was in front of her

eyes and pushed him down with her body weight. Riku, who had just avoided the rain of swords, was now mowing down her surroundings with the halberd at her right hand. Ten spiritualists crumbled down onto a pool of red liquid as the result. Pressing the handle of the halberd at the ground, she tried to regain her breathing. Her whole body was sluggish. Her feet were somewhat staggering. Even if it was only a little, she wanted to rest. But there was no way the spiritualists would give her the time to do that.

“Die, red haired demon!”

Many spears were thrust at Riku. Riku positioned the halberd at her right hand as to defend herself. It wouldn't be possible to defend against all the attacks. But even so, at the instant all the spears came, she still using the halberd to defend and she held her sword with her left hand as to complement it. Narrowing her eyes, she was looking at the spears that were approaching her at the front of her eyes. And then...

“Scatter in pieces, human.”

Suddenly, a single long sword fell down from above.

All the spears that were being thrust at Riku fell down to the ground broken, and the body of the spiritualists were all cut in two. In front of Riku, who got surprised about her targets suddenly dying like that, a pair of dragon wings widely spread. Although the wings merged with the darkness of the night well, it was as if both of them were shining.

“You held out very well, Riku.”

Turning his head over to Riku, she saw the two blue eyes.

The eyes that were blue like the unrestrained big sky.

“Captain, Leivein?”

It was someone that shouldn't have been here.

Riku had heard he was stationed at a garrison nearby, but she didn't hear that he would be coming here. Without being able to properly accept the reality of such good fortune that was in front of her eyes, she had her mouth open while having a surprised face. Running to Riku's side, who was acting like that, was the rabbit eared sergeant major.

"We came to help. It's too dangerous with only the two of you, captain."

Roppu Nezaarand staggeringly supported Riku with his shoulder.*1

"Sergeant major Nezaarand?"

"By the time I arrived at the inn, the spiritualists that were heading there had already been killed. ...Captain, please, rest here. Let lieutenant general deal with the rest of the enemies."

"No... I can't let captain do the labor work by himself."

Putting the sword in her scabbard, she held her halberd full of energy.

She wanted to fight together with Leivein someday.

She wanted to fight together with Leivein, just like his wings did.

She didn't want to be a burden that wasn't able to fight.

"Sergeant major, I will leave Vrusto to you."

"Eh, but, second lieutenant Vrusto is already being aided by lieutenant colonel Foster... Rather, it will be dangerous if you don't rest!!"

Without hearing to Roppu's advice, Riku rushed over to the wave of spiritualists. Most of the spiritualists had already lost their life by Leivein's hands. The great sword dripping in blood cut. As if it had sentience, the great sword whistled, cutting the air. Even though she was being reckless, she was

cutting down the spiritualists that were going to attack behind Leivein.

“Go rest. Didn’t I order you to do that?”

While cutting down the spiritualists, Leivein muttered. While raising her voice, Riku swung her halberd.

“No! I can’t let captain having to do all the work.”

While saying that, she had been killing spiritualists. While seeing her attitude by giving a sidelong glance to her, he had been crushing spiritualist heads with his hand. The corners of his mouth slightly raised.

“Is that so? Then, kill them all with the upmost of your abilities.”

“Y, yes!!”

Receiving Leivein’s words in her heart, Riku swung her halberd. Although only seemingly, it was possible to believe that her body was filled with more energy than before. It was as if her exhausted body that had reached its limits was resurrected. Getting covered in blood, she was running around the street killing the spiritualists. Their numbers were dropping in a incredible rate. A spiritualist that knew by experience he should go call for more reinforcements didn’t escape from Roppu’s speed. After steadily killing them one by one, finally, Riku pressed her halberd next to the neck of the last remaining spiritualist.

“And with you... It’s over.”

The last surviving spiritualist was showing fear on his expression. Riku thought he would do some stupid supplication. But with his trembling voice, he shouted as if he was directing his voice to someone.

“Ce-Cellia-sama! Banzai!!”

“Oh, sorry, but that voice won’t reach anyone.”

The spiritualist that had shouted words of praise as to escape from the fear of death lost his head in an instant. With his eyes wide-open in fear, as he was saying those words of praise to someone... He had easily been killed.

After confirming that Riku had killed the last remaining person, Leivein walked to Charlotte’s side. Charlotte was standing, being guarded by Vrusto and Keity.

“I’ve been late, Charlotte-sama.”

Silently kneeling, he lowered his head to the top of the Demon Lord army.

Looking at Leivein, who was kneeling, she snorted. And then, with a overbearing tone, she declared.

“You were late on coming here. Even though it would have been better if you had come here together with me to begin with... Well, it’s fine. If it wasn’t for your subordinate, maybe I wouldn’t still be breathing by now. I shall give her a reward later.”

“Ha”(はっ)

“Umu, now then, let’s go back home. We weren’t able to meet with Shibira, but... There is no way we can do so after all this turmoil.”

Charlotte started to walk and Keity followed after her. By the time everyone had been affected by the feeling of wanting to go back home, there was a single person who felt like she wanted them to stop. It was Riku. Looking like she wouldn’t move her feet anytime soon, her eyes were sparkling in a stranger manner.

Seeing Riku like that, Vrusto felt like rebuking her. After a sigh, he was about to tell her something, but before that, Leivein was faster with the words.

“What’s the matter? We are going.”

In Vrusto’s place, Leivein told Riku that. But Riku shook her head.

“No, there is no need to go back. Now that captain Leivein came, everything will be easily done.”

They slaughtered the enemy . Right at this place, they killed most of the spiritualists that were stationed at the city. Since that was the case, everything would be easy. In her eyes, the image of Rook, who would be comfortably sitting at the residence right now, reflected on her eyes.

“If captain is here, we can burst through that residence’s defenses in an instant. And then, and then..!!”

“And then, kill a certain person that is at that residence?”

Leivein quietly said.

Riku nodded full of energy. While looking at his blue eyes, she expressed her sincerest thoughts.

“Yes. It seems the next head of the Barusak family is in there. If we kill him now, I think it will be much easier for us to advance towards the land where the Demon Lord has been sealed.”

“I see.”

Leivein nodded. While shaking off the blood that was sticking at his great sword, he looked at Riku. And then, with a low voice, he said.

“But right now, we will be retreating.”

“Wh-Why is that!?”

Because of the surprise, Riku gave two steps behind.

She didn’t think her proposal would be rejected. She didn’t know about Charlotte or Keity, but if it was her beloved and

respected Leivein, she thought he would be able to understand. They had enough fighting power. Not only she still could fight right now, but if Leivein were to go as well, all would go successfully. But without giving any thoughts, the proposal was rejected. Leivein extended his hand to Riku's head. She had seen many times how his bloody hand crushed heads. Unconsciously, Riku prepared herself.

Perhaps she was about to die as a punishment for giving an advice that wasn't fitting to Leivein.

"Did you get degraded to some assassin that would rely on hiding in order to attack?"

Leivein's hand gently stroked Riku's head. She was surprised the reason her proposal was denied wasn't because Charlotte had declared they would go back home before, or because they had insufficient fighting power at hands, but a completely different reason, and also was very surprised by how he had stroked her head. Her red hair that was covered in blood was being stroked by Leivein without any hesitations.

"If you want to show your power, you must do it in a fair and square battle. Hiding at a shadow and attacking is something only weak people do. It is not something strong people do."

Leivein was gently and gently stroking her soaked in blood hair.

He couldn't be thought as the same person that had been killing the enemies full of might before. Riku's heart was gradually being filled with happiness, overlapping her surprise. She embraced the feelings that felt like she had been recognized by Leivein.

"You may drop the hammer on those that threw you away on the battlefield. Doing so with the power you've been training for. ... I'm expecting from you, Riku."

While looking at his spread wings at his back, Riku saluted.

“Yes, understood!”

Today’s battle, if Leivein hadn’t come to save her, she wouldn’t be living.

With that, her life had been saved by him twice. Although she had been recognized by him, this sort of thing was no good.

She wanted to become stronger. Become stronger and be more useful. Because her life was saved, she wanted to fight next to him to the point of being able to save his life at the times of battle.

Until her last breath.

1. I doesn’t say whether he really used his shoulder to help Riku or did some other kind of aid. The verb used literally means to support, to aid, *etc.* But with only this as a description, there is no way to know ;-;

Chapter 31

Whispers of the Woman in the White Coat

The Barusak residence, which is located just at the outskirts of the capital, was engulfed into an unnatural tension.

It was as if that residence that was white as chalk was faintly being surrounded by black clouds. Even the lowest servants of the house had their expressions filled with a anxiety and tension. Inside the residence, Rook was alone walking. Without bringing anyone together with him, he was walking with his noble face twisted. His mood was felt like he could explode at any moment if one were to confront him in a bad manner. The servants that would as usual bow their heads when he crossed their paths, whether it was because they feared his irritation or because of another reason, they would hurriedly get out of his way.

Among them, there was solely one person... A single hero that would talk to Rook like usual.

“Oya, Rook, what happened for you to have such a dangerous expression like that?”(おや)

It was a woman wearing a white coat that was fiddling with her smoking pipe with a single hand. After giving a glance to the woman, he snorted.

“It’s nothing. It has nothing to do with Raku-oneesan.”

“If her cute and genius little brother gets in trouble, isn’t it the job of an elder sister to help him?”

The woman called Raku was showing a bold smile.

The head of the family, Raimon Barusak, had three children. Because the second daughter was incompetent, she had been

disposed of and is not living at the residence anymore. Setting aside that useless daughter, the two remaining people were extremely talented. One of them was the next head of the family who was even said to be a genius that would only appear once each thousand years, Rook Barusak, and the other person was Rook's elder sister, the chief of the research of cutting-edge spiritualist techniques, Raku Barusak. The two of them had good looks that wouldn't lose to the good looks the royalty had, with both having their characteristic porcelain like white skin that seemed unfit to the sunlight and hair as silver as snow.

But Raku would never properly maintain her hair. Her hair that was supposed to be a beautiful silver hair was very painful to look at. Adding to that, she probably thinks that having a haircut is a pain to do, and so, having her silver hair extending to her back, she had a dirty rubber band fitting to the appearance of her hair being used to tie it. Without comparison to Rook's hair, who would make one want to touch it, the difference was to the point of her hair making one want to close one's eyes.

"I know it well. I... I know everything."

Rook glared at Raku with a sharp glint on his eyes. In Rook's eyes, flames of hatred were burning. Clenching his fists, it looked as if he wanted to punch his elder sister Raku immediately.

"Dear me, what would you be talking about?"

But Raku's easygoing expression wasn't broken. Putting the smoking pipe in her mouth, the air became filled with smoke. Her demeanor seemed to be pouring oil in Rook's anger. Grasping the collar of her white robe, he lifted her up.

"Don't play dumb!! Because of your... Because of the bomb Raku-oneesan made, Kurumi had died!!"

Remembering Kurumi's loveable figure, tears started to come out of his eyes.

It was not only because she was a spy that was getting information from the demon side that he felt pained; he also loved her as one of the harem members. How many times had he used his hand to touch on her fluffy small tail that was fitting of a squirrel-shaped demon? While blushing, Kurumi would let him touch her smooth tail. But now, he couldn't touch that fluffy fur anymore.

Kurumi had died at the underground passage of Derufoi city.

He didn't know the situation in detail, but thinking how the deplorable dead body of Rebecca, who was like a little sister to him, was also down there, and also knowing about the death of the spiritualists that went down there to see what was going on, it was possible to assume that Rebecca and Kurumi had been cornered and... Had chosen death by their own.

"If Kurumi had to choose to self-explode... Then, there would be no way Rebecca would also be killed by getting caught in the explosion.

Tears were falling at the floor drop by drop.

He wasn't going to hear Rebecca's mispronounced words anymore.*1

The little girl that would always be grasping his sleeves was not here anymore. She wouldn't show him her pure smile once again.

Rebecca had talent as a spiritualist dormant inside her. But they faced an demon that was able to corner Kurumi. Probably, it was a very rough fight. Her head that had been retrieved was scorched and no longer was it possible to read the expression on her face. The instant she had been caught by the explosion... Must have been painful. It was probably so agonizing she had cried out at the moment. Although Rook

was her senior, he wasn't able to save her. She ended up dying a painful death. He was suffering with the memories of the time he had been raising her with care.

"Saying she died by being caught by the explosion isn't precise."

Although she was being grasped by her collar, her expression didn't change. As if it was a pain in the ass, she started to state the facts about all the situation.

"Didn't they tell you that from the autopsy results, she most likely had died before getting caught by the explosion?"

"Shut up!! Even so, but even so!!"

"That Kurumi, or whatever may that demon be called, simply got killed. Hey, it's that thing. You can simply get revenge for the demon that killed that squirrel. Wouldn't you feel better if you simply annihilated the whole demon race?"

"Of course I will get revenge!! But, to hold a grudge... That... Doing that is no good."

He mustn't start despising the demons.

He wanted to have revenge on the demon that killed Selestinna. He wanted to kill the demon that cornered Kurumi to death. He wanted to drop the hammer of justice onto the demon that cut the adorable Rebecca in pieces.

But he couldn't hold a grudge over the whole demon race.

Rook always made sure he wouldn't go past this line.

In the game, the magnificent and hard-working main character Rook wouldn't hold a grudge over the demons no matter what kind of pain he would go through. In fact, even if one of the heroines was to get killed by the demons because of a wrong choice, he would still search for the path of reconciliation. That's why he couldn't hold a grudge over the

demons.

He couldn't forgive the demons that not only killed Selestinna, but even Kurumi and Rebecca. He didn't want to have revenge on only the demons that were involved with those cases, but actually wanted to annihilate all of the demons. But for Rook to keep being Rook, only that he needed to avoid doing at any costs. Rook became desperate and started to reprimand himself. But rather than being able to bear those feelings, his hatred for the demons was only welling up.

"Blurting words of hatred to the creator of the bomb is merely you venting you anger, you know? I, Rook... I made the bomb just the way you desired. The demon that had actually used is the one to blame. ...Or perhaps, you never thought Kurumi would actually use that bomb?"

Rook clenched his teeth.

At the time, which Raku had been obsessed with the production of bombs, Rook asked her whether she could make a bomb that would explode only by pressing a button with the teeth without thinking too much. Of course, the main character in the game didn't ask for such a thing. Rook had only asked for it just for fun, and didn't intent to actually use it.

Of course, even though Raku did make something similar to that, she wasn't able to make such button triggered bomb. However, she was able to make a tiny bomb that was small enough to fit on the tooth. Even after receiving it, he simply had left inside his desk, but... Because Kurumi insisted she wanted it, he ended up giving the bomb to her. Of course, he had told her to never use it no matter what when he gave it to her.

"By exploding a bomb at your teeth, it is possible to have chain explosions with bombs attached to the body... Why, why would you do that, Kurumi!"

“As the one who gave it to her, you have some responsibility, you know?”

Together with a sigh, Raku declared. Because of the way she acted, Rook glared at Raku intensely.

“Raku-ane!!”(Ane = sister)

“Be honest to yourself, my little brother.”

Raku looked at Rook as if she was looking at something pitiful.

“You hate the demons, right? Then, it is fine to annihilate them. I will spare no efforts to help you with that.”

“Don’t kid with me! I, I don’t hate...!!”

“Whichever choice you make, you will need to decide your resolve.”

“Resolve? I’ve been able to do that since a long time. I will make a world where demons and humans can live together peacefully and...”

“Stop with these ideals. Only brats would believe in those.”

From Raku’s words, Rook felt a déjà vu.

It made him think about the words Charlotte had told him. His intense feelings faded away and that cold look that was being given to him was being revived at his mind. The moment he remembered about that gaze, Rook took his hand away from Raku. And then, he unsteadily stepped back.

“I... I’m... These are not ideals. I really want to bring peace to the world. Something like war is wrong.”

“That’s what you call an ideal. You are having a nightmare that is called having ideals. ...Well, it’s fine. It’s better if you prepare yourself for the next war. The Bistolru spiritualists had their head killed and is without a leader and the Buryuuser received a serious blow by losing many of their exceptional

troops. The Bernaal and Borukk spiritualists are guarding the north. The one that will be fighting is only the Barusak. In other words, the command of the battle was entrusted to you.”

Raku’s white coat was moving with the wind. Her painful to look silver hair was fluttering in front of Rook’s eyes.

And then, after giving a last glance to her little brother, who kept standing there perplexed, she started to walk.

“Until you wake up from your ideals, do your best to survive. You can go visit me again anytime you want. I can hear your idle complaints and I will even prepare tea for you... My dear little brother.”

While smoking her smoking pipe, his elder sister Raku, one of the heroines, left the place.

All that remained there was the smell of the smoke and Rook Barusak standing still. Clenching his fists, he glared at the marks of the tears that fell at the floor before.

As if to gulp down the anger and hatred, Rook gave a deep breath. And then, as if putting on a mask, he returned to his usual face.

He hated the demons so much he couldn’t bear.

By destroying that race, he wanted them to taste the pain of losing one’s beloved ones.

But this was a feeling that the main character shouldn’t harbor.

“Even so, I...”

I must not hold resentment over the demons.

As if to engrave those words in his heart, he muttered them.

1. Uh... All there was to her dialogues that would hint this kind of things was the pretty much the Katakana being put in

Hiragana, like for example, when she would say Rook's name. Maybe some other things, but... I had thought that she simply had some annoying way to talk as a specimen of the brainless loli type.